Ex Asia et Syria

Oriental Religions in the Roman Central Balkans

Nadežda Gavrilović Vitas

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Front cover: The statuette of Magna Mater or her priestess from unknown locality, kept in the National Museum in Belgrade (photo-documentation: National Museum Belgrade)

Back cover: The head of a statue of Jupiter Dolichenus from Karataš (Diana), kept in National Museum Belgrade, The Archaeological Museum of Đerdap collection (photo: Popović, Borić Brešković 2013: 309, num. 70)

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Contents

List of Figures iii

Acknowledgements iv

Introduction 1

Geographical Frame and Pre-Roman History of the Central Balkan Roman Provinces 3

The History of the Research of Asia Minor and Syrian Religions and Cults 7

Cultural Influences and Romanisation 10

I Asia Minor Religions and Cults

1. Magna Mater 13
   - 1.1. Magna Mater Cult in Graeco-Roman Culture 13
   - 1.2. Epigraphic and archaeological monuments of Cybele/Magna Mater in Central Balkans 28
   - 1.3. The Cult of Cybele / Magna Mater in the Central Balkans 37

2. Attis 49
   - 2.1. The Cult of Attis in Graeco-Roman Culture 49
   - 2.2 The archaeological monuments of Attis in the Central Balkans 57
   - 2.3. The Cult of Attis in the Central Balkans 65

3. Sabazius 77
   - 3.1. The Cult of Sabazius in Graeco-Roman culture 77
   - 3.2. Epigraphic and archaeological monuments of Sabazius in the Central Balkans 81
   - 3.3. The Cult of Sabazius in the Central Balkans 90

4. Jupiter Dolichenus 92
   - 4.1. The Cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in Roman Culture 92
   - 4.2. Epigraphic and Archaeological Monuments of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Central Balkans 96
   - 4.3. The Cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Central Balkans 106

5. Jupiter Turmasgades 114
   - 5.1. The Cult of Jupiter Turmasgades in the Central Balkans 114

6. The Cult of Jupiter Melanus and other Asia Minor Local Gods 118
   - 6.1. The Cult of Jupiter Melanus and other Asia Minor local gods in the Central Balkans 118

7. Mēn 123
   - 7.1. The Cult of the god Mēn in Graeco-Roman culture 123
   - 7.2. The Cult of the god Mēn in the Central Balkans 127

8. Artemis of Ephesus 130
   - 8.1. The Cult of Artemis of Ephesus in Graeco-Roman culture 130
   - 8.2. The Cult of Artemis of Ephesus in the Central Balkans 137

II Syrian Religions in the Central Balkans

1. Sol Invictus 140
   - 1.1. The Cult of Sol Invictus in Roman culture 140
   - 1.2. The Cult of Sol Invictus in the Central Balkans 144

2. Dea Syria 151
   - 2.1. The Cult of Dea Syria in Graeco-Roman culture 151
   - 2.2. The Cult of Dea Syria in the Central Balkans 155

3. Theos Hypsistos 165
   - 3.1. The Cult of Theos Hypsistos in Graeco-Roman culture 165
   - 3.2. The Cult of Theos Hypsistos in the Central Balkans 168

III Quarries, Workshops and their Localisation 172
IV Palmyrene Funerary Monuments in the Central Balkans 174
V Conclusion 183
VI Bibliography 194
VII Catalogue 214
VIII Maps 250

List of Figures

Map of indigenous tribes in central Balkans 4
Localities in Danube Limes Moesia Superior 6
Fresco of Magna Mater procession, Pompeii 18
Marble relief of a gallus from Lanuvium 20
Statue and drawing of a standing gallus 21
Drawing of the reconstruction of the taurobolium 25
Statue of god Serapis from Viminacium 32
Tetrastyle prostylos from Felix Romuliana 35
Stone figure of lion from Čuljevina 44
Stone figures of lions from Požarevac 44
Stone figure of lion from Karan 44
The statue of a Reclining Attis from Ostia 54
The Parabiago Plate 56
Bronze masks of Attis from physician casket Viminacium 64
Attis mask on a yoke belonging to a horse harness from Viminacium 65
Bronze bust of god Sabazius 83
Votive hand of Sabazius 84
Sabazius plate from Copenhagen 87
The sculptural composition of a drunken Dionysus with a satyr from Mediana, Niš 89
The Bacchic group from London Mithraeum 90
The Dolichenum in Egeta 110
The Sacrarium of Dolichenum in Egeta 110
The Dolichenum in Karataš 111
The Dolichenum in Čezava 111
Altar dedicated to Jupiter Turmasgades from Caesarea Maritima 115
Altar dedicated to Tormasgade from Doliche 116
The bust of god Mēn 125
The terracotta of god Mēn riding a horse 125
The sculpture of Artemis of Ephesus from the Prytaneion of Ephesus 131
Temple of Ephesian Artemis, Hadrian and demos of Ephesus in Ephesus 134
The relief of Sol Invictus from Rome 144
Monument of the priest Lucius Sevius Rufus 149
Relief of Atargatis from Dura Europos 153
Relief of Atargatis from Khirbet el Tannur 154
Relief of Hadad and Dea Syria from Dura Europos 157
Fresco of Iulius Terentius' sacrifice from Dura Europos 160
Map of the mines in Moesia Superior 173
The head of the priest from National Museum in Belgrade 176
Loculus relief of the priest from National Museum in Belgrade 178
Funerary stele of a young girl from National Museum in Belgrade 180

Acknowledgements

The religions and cults of Asia Minor, Syrian, Persian and Egyptian origin, which were present in the territory of the Central Balkan provinces during the period of the Roman reign, with all their characteristics and peculiarities, have been a focus of my scientific research for a long time, since my doctoral thesis, particularly because they represent such an inexhaustible subject. Although there are only several archaeological and epigraphic monuments confirming the Egyptian cults of Serapis and Isis in the Central Balkans' territory, they drew the attention of scientists, as the monuments of the god Mithras, while Asia Minor and Syrian cults were somewhat marginalised in the eyes and minds of researchers, without any reason whatsoever.

This book was written out of my wish to, relying on epigraphic, archaeological and historical sources, gather, document, analyse and interpret all so-far known testimonies from the Roman Central Balkans' territory, which represent evidence of the presence of the Asia Minor and Syrian religions that spread and flourished in the new territory, incorporated in their own way into a local context and existed until the end of the Antiquity. In an attempt to encompass and comprehend every possible aspect of the religions for their more accurate interpretation, it was necessary to revise known monuments, to include new finds and to make valid hypothesis in those cases where epigraphic, archaeological and historical evidence was not present.

In my efforts to do that, I had the privilege and pleasure to be helped by many colleagues from Serbia and abroad, to whom I wish to offer my thankfulness: Bojana Borić-Brešković director of the National Museum in Belgrade, Deana Ratković and Jelena Kondić, museum counsellors from the National Museum in Belgrade, Milorad Ignjatović museum curator from the Belgrade City Museum, Dragana Spasić Djurić and Teodora Branković museum counsellors from the National Museum in Požarevac and particularly to my dear friend and colleague Vesna Crnoglavac museum counsellor from the National Museum in Niš.

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'Corpus habet cineres, animam sacer abstulit aer'

(the inscription on a funerary monument found in Salona, *CIL* III, 6384, with images of *Attis tristis* on the lateral sides)

Introduction

> 'The spiritual culture of Antiquity on our territory represents a special field of research, the study of the cults based on the written material with new epigraphic finds, but it will never be completed unless it blends with the research of cult objects. The research of the monuments of Oriental cults is a valuable contribution to this problem'.

These words were spoken by one of the most important classical scholars in the subject of the ancient Balkans' history, Prof. Fanula Papazoglu, at the round table where the state of the research of Antiquity in eastern parts of the former Yugoslavia was discussed.[1] Now, more than 40 years later, previously written words are unfortunately still true, since from then only a few studies and books dealing with a particular Graeco-Roman cult have been published. Even in those monographs, 'Oriental' religions and cults, although at first glance interesting to the researchers, remained out of focus. The reasons for such an occurrence are many – unsystematically led archaeological excavations in bigger Roman centres, unpublished documentation from previous archaeological research and the frequent discontinuity in the publishing of new excavation results or of a particular kind of material from a certain locality or area have left us with short archaeological reports, a few unpublished master's and doctoral theses and catalogues of museum collections dealing with different archaeological monuments and objects, among which cult objects like sculptures, statues, reliefs etc., are presented in catalogue form. Specific problems were also tackled sporadically in the context of an individual monument or object like, for example, the problem of the typology and iconography of votive and/or funerary monuments, where inscriptions (if present) confirm the Oriental origin of a deity and where the dedicant's name or presented iconography imply the dedicant's Oriental origin. In the context of cult monuments and objects, rare recent articles tend to take as given already existing scientific opinions from earlier literature, without entering deeper into the core of the problematics of numerous important elements like literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources, the revision of material, and the analysis of iconography and of the local context (the topography, residents, institutions, economy, social relationships, spiritual life etc. in a particular locality or area). In different Roman Central Balkan localities, sacralised spaces are sometimes presumed in earlier literature, but there are no efforts to analyse and interpret published or unpublished archaeological documentation or to conduct an eventual reconstruction of the space in question.[2] Similar to neighbouring provinces like Dacia,[3] Roman provincial religion in the Central Balkan territory was understood as one of many sides of the Roman culture, without really comprehending that it mirrored the core of one's life and beliefs, with all the wealth and complexity of ritual practices, sacrifices, prayers etc., which encompassed one's religious knowledge about a particular deity or religion, but primarily one's most intimate thoughts and feelings.

Since none of the above mentioned problems (like many others associated with the identity of the indigenous population in a particular part of the Central Balkans' territory, the existing degree of reception or resistance to the particular cult or religion in question, the existing level of syncretism between unknown indigenous deities and a particular foreign deity, etc.) were not explored more deeply in earlier literature related to the cults and religions from Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt and Persia in the Roman Central Balkans, it is clear that any serious research must take into account not only previously mentioned, but also the effort to encompass all the complexity of a particular territory and its residents in question, to be able to get as clear and accurate a picture as possible. All characteristics and specifics of the Central Balkans' area must be reckoned with, bearing in mind the complex situation in the pre-Roman period, when various indigenous tribes inhabited the territory and the fact that the northern and southern parts of the Central Balkans were under different cultural and, thus, religious influences before the Roman conquest. Into this quite complicated structure, the Roman army, administration and culture were introduced by the Roman state, bringing people *ex toto orbe Romano*.

[1] Papazoglu 1978: 155-164.

[2] In localities where it is possible, like Viminacium for example, new field methods like geophysics methods (geomagnetic, geoelectric, geo-radar), GIS, LIDAR, multidisciplinary approach which includes researchers from other sciences like geomorphologists, petrologists, archaeobotanists, archaeozoologists etc.),3D models etc. are applied, but unfortunately not in many other Roman localities in Central Balkans.

[3] Szabó 2018: 8. As C. Szabó explains studying Roman religion of Dacia in Romania was for a long time but a single chapter of the 'cultural life' of the province and presented as a consequence of the 'deep Romanisation', Szabó 2018: 8.

The focus of this book will be the cults and religions of Asia Minor and Syria, by which I refer to all currently known theologies and deities attested epigraphically and archaeologically in the territory of the Central Balkan Roman provinces, like the Metroac religion, the cults of the gods Sabazius, Jupiter Dolichenus, Jupiter Turmasgades, Jupiter Melanus and other Asia Minor local Jupiters, Mên and the goddess Artemis Ephesia. Syrian cults are presented by through monuments of the deities Sol Invictus and Dea Syria (Atargatis). Since we dispose of only one, but very intriguing monument dedicated to the god Theos Hypsistos, I included it into the corpus of monuments, as part of the discussion about Palmyrene funerary sculptures of priests and private religious associations attested in the Central Balkan. However intriguing and very important religion in Roman Central Balkan' territory, attested with numerous monuments and sanctuaries in the antiquity, Mithraism will be the subject of a separate publication by this author.[4]

Judging by the number of confirmed Asia Minor and Syrian deities, it is very clear that they were favoured in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkan, which is supported by the fact that in parallel with the Roman invasion and their conquest of the territory during the 1st century, the first traces of religions from Asia Minor can be followed, brought by the Roman army, merchants and other social groups. Since I am aware of the complexity and the breadth of the subject of this book, it is necessary, after specifying the geographical and time frame, to carefully follow the paths of penetration of each religion and cult in question, the form that each religion and cult had in the moment of its diffusion into the Central Balkan territory and the different methods of their integration, adaptation and transformation within a local context. Equally important are the iconography and syncretism of different imageries, the religious aspects of each deity, the significance of official imperial ideology, the role of dedicants belonging to different professions and social strata, as the main carriers of a particular cult, the presence or absence of current philosophical teachings, the cult organisation and hierarchy, the sanctuaries and sacralised spaces and, finally, the co-existence of the budding Christianity and the demise of pagan cults in general.

However, the focus will be to present all the existing epigraphic and archaeological evidence connected to the Asia Minor and Syrian religions and cults attested in the Roman Central Balkan. In those cases where a certain Asia Minor of Syrian cult (or for that matter, the influence of a certain cult) is presumably present but cannot be sufficiently argued, it will be highlighted but not included into the corpus of monuments.

Along with the revision and presentation of new analysis and the interpretation of different problems in the context of Asia Minor and Syrian religions and cults during the Roman reign in the Central Balkans, it should be possible to determine and understand the role, influence and importance of these religions and cults in the lives of Romanised and indigenous population and to comprehend in what way and to what degree they were incorporated into the religious system and beliefs of Central Balkan residents during Antiquity.

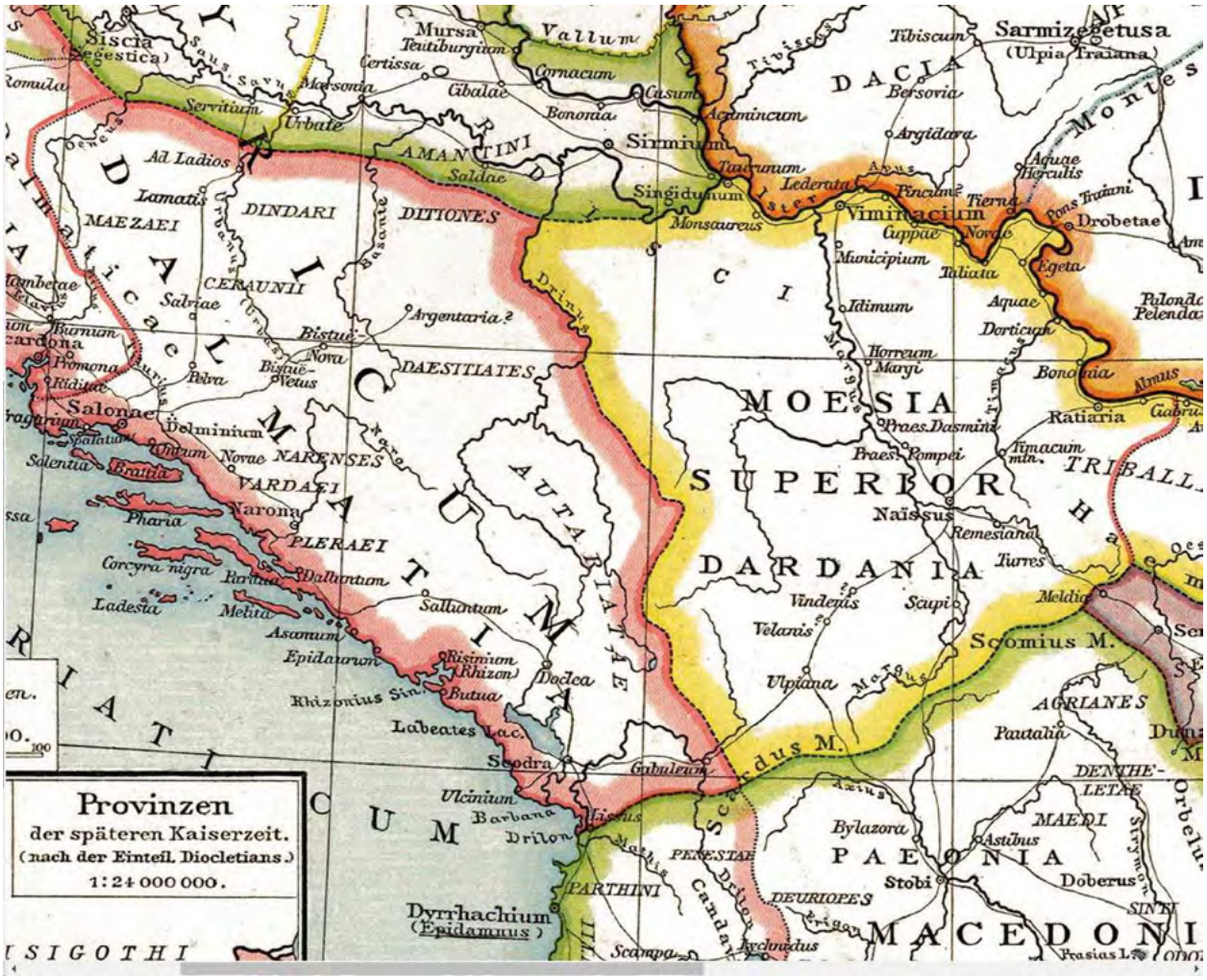
[4] The Corpus of Mithraic monuments from Central Balkans' territory, followed by their analysis and interpretation, is in the preparation to be published.

Geographical Frame and Pre-Roman History of the Central Balkan Roman Provinces

The term 'Central Balkan' is not precisely defined in scholarly literature, but it is necessary to somehow determine the territory which constituted a particular geographical part in the Roman Empire. The central position of this territory between the Greeks in the south, the Illyrians in the west and the Thracians in the east made it not only a link between the Hellenized and Roman world, but also a very transitional area for different cultures and a very attractive space for settling, because of its abundant forests, mountains and river valleys that offered fertile land, but also because of other natural resources, like rich mines and thermal springs.[5] Guided by the natural frontiers of the Balkan Peninsula, the definition of famous geographer Jovan Cvijić, the Central Balkan area would comprise a small part of today's eastern Bosnia, the whole of Serbia with Kosovo, part of northern Montenegro and part of the Republic of North Macedonia (a little below the area of today's Skoplje). In Antiquity, it would encompass the eastern part of the province of Dalmatia and the whole of Moesia Superior, that is, in Late Antiquity, parts of the Roman provinces of Dalmatia, Moesia Prima, Praevalitana, Dardania, Dacia Ripensis and Dacia Mediterranea.[6] As S. Ferjančić explains, there are considerable differences between the Roman Balkan provinces, in the context of their formation and military organisation, but the mutual factor is that they were all urbanised and Romanised in a similar period, in the last decades of the Republic.[7] Before the formation of the Roman provinces, the Central Balkan territory was inhabited by different tribes known to the ancient writers as the Tribali, Autariatae, Dardani, Scordisci and Moesi (Figure 1).[8] Each of them inhabited a particular part of the territory and had its own history of confrontation and pacification with the Roman state. Although they were settled in the same geographical area, they were not similar in an ethnic, political or language context.[9] As F. Papazoglu points out, the Tribali were closer to the Thracian people, the Dardanianas had a strong Thracian streak, while the Scordisci were of Celtic origin. The first population mentioned by ancient writers in the 5th century BC were the Triballi, while the Autariatae are known from the end of the 4th century, followed by the Dardanians and the Scordisci, who appear in historical sources at the beginning of the 3rd century BC. The Moesi are not mentioned until the beginning of the 1st century. These tribes had their own particular political history, social organisation and structure, economy and religious practices. Nevertheless, while the Tribali, Autariatae and Moesi remained at a semi-nomadic level, hunting and practicing primitive agriculture without permanent settlements, the Dardanians and Scordisci reached a higher degree of civilisation and cultural progress. Beside farming and cattle-breeding, their material culture shows knowledge of different kinds of crafts, trades and exploitation of mines. They built their settlements on hilltops with earthen walls around them and had a road network defined by the natural features of the terrain. Some of them, like the Celtic Scordisci, even had their own monetary economy and mints.[10] Without entering further into the history and development of these paleo-Balkan tribes, this ethnic diversity was present at the moment of the Roman conquest, at the beginning of the 1st century.

The first contact between the Romans and the indigenous Central Balkan tribes happened in 200 BC, when Publius Sulpicius Galba reached Illyricum as a result of the attack on Macedonia. The Dardanians were the tribe that is mentioned as the one tribe that offered help to the Romans.[11] From that period on, until the final conquest of the whole territory, there were constant wars between the Romans and paleo-Balkan tribes, with the turning point in the Roman attempts to conquer the indigenous population between Macedonia and the Danube and to reach the Danube River to establish a secure boundary against the barbarian tribes (later known as the *limes*) being Marcus Licinius Crassus' expedition in 29-28 BC. He succeeded to conquer the north-eastern parts of the Central Balkan territory, with the river Timok being the western frontier of his conquest.[12] It is likely that at that time, the Dardanians lost their independence and later, in Pliny's Natural History, they are named as a peregrine community in the province of Moesia.[13] In 10

[5] Papazoglu 1969: 5.
[6] Cvijić 1987: 25-30.
[7] The Balkan provinces of Roman Empire were Pannonia, Dalmatia, Moesia, Macedonia, Thrace and Achaia and S. Ferjančić distinguishes Macedonia and Achaia from all other mentioned provinces by their early forming during the 2nd century BC, Ferjančić 2002: 9.
[8] Papazoglu 1969.
[9] In the context of paleo-Balkan languages, Thracian, Illyrian, Celtic and Dacian languages existed.
[10] Popović 1987, with further bibliography about Scordisci's issuing of coins imitations of Greek coinage.
[11] Livy XXXI, 28, 1-3.
[12] Dio Cassius doesn't mention Crassus' advancing west from the river Timok, therefore it can be presumed that it was the boundary he reached, Dio Cass. LI 23-27; Mirković 1968: 21.
[13] Mirković 1968: 22; Plin. *Natural History* III 149.


Provinzen
der späteren Kaiserzeit.
(nach der Einteil. Diocletians.)
1:24 000 000.
DACIA
MOESIA
SUPERIOR
DARDANIA
PAEONIA
MACEDONI
DALMATIA
PANNONIA
Sarmizegetusa
(Ulpia Traiana)
Viminacium
Singidunum
Naissus
Scomius M.
Dyrrhachium
(Epidamnus)
Scodra
Salonae
Narona
Dalmatium
Sirmium
Drobetae
Ratiaria
Stobi
Doberus
Bylazora
Ulpiana
Vindenis
Velanis
Idimum
Municipium
Horreum Margi
Praes. Dasmini
Praes. Pompei
Timacum mn.
Aquae Herculis
Pons Traiani
Egeta
Taliata
Aquae Dorticum
Bononia
Remesiana
Turres
Scupi
Meldia
Pautalia
AGRIANES
DENTHE-LETAE
MAEDI
DEURIOPES
PARTHINI
PELAGONIA
Lissus
Ulcinium
Barbana
Drilon
Labeates Lac.
Rhizonius Sin.
Rhizon
Butua
Doclea
Epidaurum
Asamum
Melita
Ladesta
Corcyra nigra
Pharia
PLERAEI
VARDAEI
NARENSES
DAESITIATES
DINDARI
DITIONES
MAEZAEI
CERAUNII
AMANTINI
Ad Ladios
Lamatis
Servitium
Urbate
Mursa
Teutiburgium
Certissa
Mansona
Cibalae
Cornacum
Vallum
Bononia
Casuni
Acumincum
Argidava
Tibiscum
Tierna
Municipium
Cuppae
Novae
Monsaureus
Saldae
Argentaria?
Bistue Nova
Bistue Vetus
Petra
Salviae
Burnum
Promona
Riditae
Delminium
Novae
Solentia
Bratida
Pharia
Corcyra nigra
Ladesta
Melita
Asamum
Epidaurum
Rhizonius Sin.
Labeates Lac.
Scodra
Ulcinium
Barbana
Drilon
Lissus
Gabulenum
Scampa
Dyrrhachium
(Epidamnus)
Axius
Astibus
Strymon
Orbelus
Nestus
Hebrus
Tiburnus
Tibiscus
Argidava
Aquae Herculis
Pons Traiani
Egeta
Aquae Dorticum
Bononia
Almus
Ratiaria
Timacum mn.
Remesiana
Turres
Scupi
Meldia
Pautalia
Vindenis
Velanis
Ulpiana
Scomius M.
Naissus
Praes. Pompei
Praes. Dasmini
Horreum Margi
Idimum
Municipium
Cuppae
Novae
Monsaureus
Singidunum
Viminacium
Drobetae
Sirmium
Acumincum
Casuni
Bononia
Cibalae
Cornacum
Vallum
Mursa
Teutiburgium
Certissa
Mansona
Servitium
Urbate
Ad Ladios
Lamatis
Saldae
Argentaria?
Bistue Nova
Bistue Vetus
Petra
Salviae
Burnum
Promona
Riditae
Salonae
Delminium
Novae
Solentia
Bratida
Pharia
Narona
Dalmatium
Corcyra nigra
Ladesta
Melita
Asamum
Epidaurum
Rhizonius Sin.
Rhizon
Butua
Doclea

more decades had to pass before, in 86, Domitian divided Moesia into two provinces: Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior.[18]

The territory of the Roman province of Moesia Superior encompassed most of today's Serbia with Kosovo, bordering parts of eastern Bosnia and Hercegovina and north-eastern Montenegro, the north-western part of Bulgaria along the Danube and the northern part of the Republic of Northern Macedonia. The northern frontier of Moesia Superior went along the Danube to the confluence with the River Sava up to the River Cibrica in Bulgaria (which was also the boundary between Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior).[19] Moesia Superior was formed in 86 and existed until 272, with a particular military, administrative and cultural history, because of its characteristics such as geographic position, natural resources and the ethnicities that populated the territory in the pre-Roman period.[20] S. Dušanić states that Moesia Superior was divided into four major units named after the tribes that lived on the territory: Tricornenses (for the Tricornienses), Pincenses (for the Pincenses living by the River Pek), Moesia (for the Moesi living around the River Timok) and Dardania (for the Dardani who lived in the south).[21] However, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy give different accounts about the tribes in the territory of the Central Balkans. Pliny the Elder writes about the tribes of Dardanians, Celegeri, Triballi, Timachi and Moesi in Moesia and that was probably the situation at the moment of the formation of the province of Moesia and for several decades after. The Celegeri probably inhabited north-western parts of the province and belonged to the Celtic Scordisci, while the Timachi were inhabitants of the Timacus (Timok) valley.[22] Contrary to that, four *civitates* that are believed to have inhabited Moesia Superior upon its formation are mentioned by Ptolemy at the beginning of the 2nd century AD, who introduces two new communities, *Tricornienses* and *Pincenses* (named after the sites of *Tricornium* (Ritopek) and *Pincum* (Golubac).[23] Ptolomeus' account does not coincide with the earlier accounts about the Balkan tribes of the Dardani, Tribali and Moesi.[24] Without elaborating further, it is important to note that the ethnic and linguistic diversity continued to exist among Central Balkan indigenous residents upon the Roman conquest, confirming Illyrian, Thracian, Dacian and Celtic ethnicities and cultures.[25]

The Roman province of Moesia Superior had an important geographically strategic position that connected Rome and the western provinces with the eastern provinces via numerous roads and rivers like the Danube, Sava, Morava, Vardar, Nišava, Timok and Ibar. The earliest contact between the Romans and inhabitants of the Central Balkans happened through the Roman province of Macedonia, along the rivers Vardar and Južna Morava, when the Romans reached the lower Danube to conquer the Thracians. Aware of the need to connect their camps in Moesia with their bases on the lower Danube, the Romans began building an inland road along the later Moesia Superior's frontier.[26] Archaeological excavations conducted for decades in the Iron Gate area, have shown the complexity and strategic importance of Moesia Superior's Danube Limes frontier which was, due to the geomorphological features of the terrain and the Danube, already functioning from the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century (Figure 2).[27] The natural resources

App. III 30, 86; Tacitus, *Annales*, I. 80.

[18] Mirković 1968: 22; Mladenović 2012: 5. In the period between the forming of province Moesia and its division in two provinces Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior, several important changes happened in the territory of the newly formed province, primarily in the military context: before 16 year BC, no Roman legions were situated in the province, while after the first decade of the 1st century, first Roman *castra* were founded on the Danube limes, precisely on the Lower Danube between Isker and Almus, Mirković 1996: 35. Tacitus mentions two legions situated on the Moesian part of the river Danube, which was attested by the inscription from 33-34, carved in the cliff in locality Gospođin vir (*CIL* III, 1698). Those two legions were IV Scythica and V Macedonica, Tacitus, *Annales* IV 5. Also, during and after the war in 69, the Roman army in Moesia was enlarged and until the Dacian wars in 85, there were five legions present in the province: I Italica, IV Scythica, V Alaudae, IV Flavia and VII Claudia (legions IV Flavia and VII Claudia stayed in Moesia Superior until the end of the antiquity – the first legion stayed in Viminacium and the second legion in Singidunum), Mirković 1968: 23-26; Mócsy 1974: 91.

[19] The frontiers of Moesia Superior could further be followed along river Arčar up to the valley of White Timok river, towards Knjaževac between Bela Palanka and Pirot, *IMS* IV: 18; The southern frontier went across Bosiljgrad, Stracin up to the area of Tatomir and then towards Gradište and Crni vrh to the site Sopot, *IMS* VI.

[20] M. Mirković suggests that the early defence system in province Moesia, before its division, included beside the Danube area also the passages towards the Timok valley and Naissus. However, crucial years for the Danubian border were the years of Roman civil war, 68-69., when the defence of the Roman limes on the Danube was handed to the Sarmatian tribe of Yazigi. After the civil war in Rome, changes in the context of the legions stationed on Danube Limes, were made and four already mentioned legions were transferred to Moesia, Mirković 1981: 75.

[21] During the 1st century, Tribali assimilated with Dardanians and Scordisci, Papazoglu 1969: 45, 84, 97, 264-265; Dušanić 2000: 344.

[22] Wilkes 1996: 579.

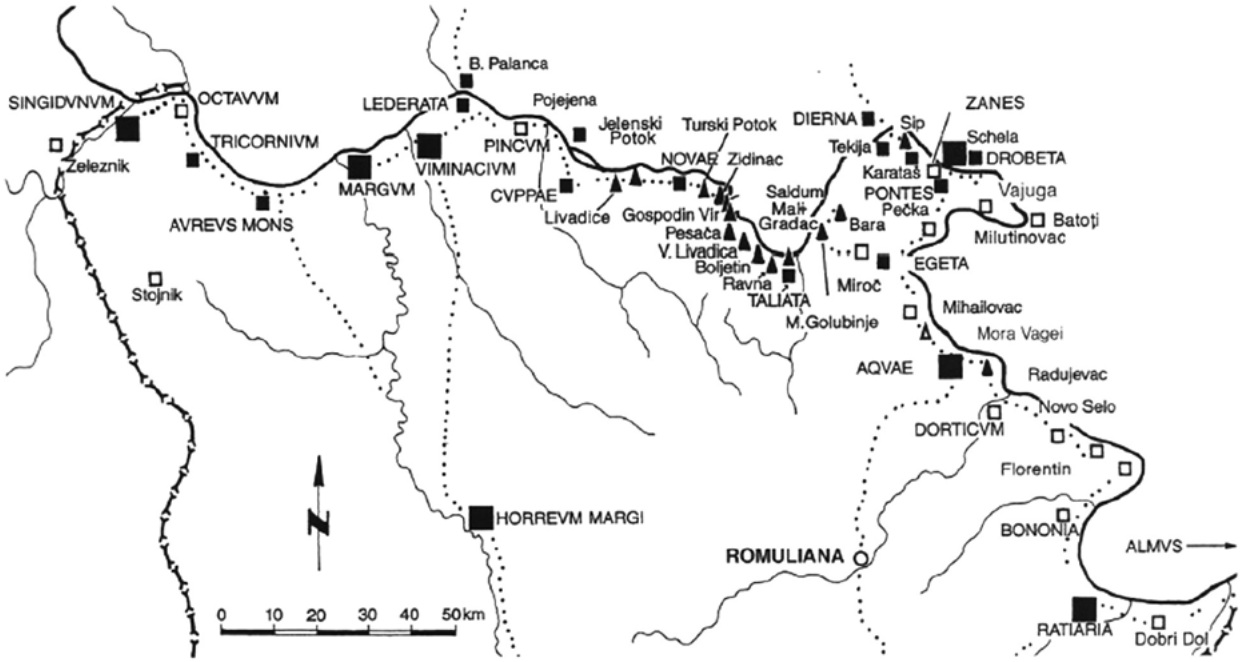
[23] Ptol. III 9.2.

[24] Plin. *Natural History,* III 149; Mócsy 1974: 66-68; It is believed that Tricornenses of Tricornium replaced the Celegeri and the Picensi of Pincum replaced the Timachi, Wilkes 1996: 580.

[25] As A. Mócsy noticed, the Illyrian element was strong among the Dardanians, but also in the western parts of the province, like for example in the territory of Municipium S (presumably Splonum?) around the modern town of Pljevlja (today north-eastern part of Montenegro), where several native communities of the Delmatae from the coastal interior of province Dalmatia were transferred in the 2nd century because Romans needed working force for mines and agriculture. Celtic component attributed to Scordisci is noticed in the northern parts of Moesia Superior, while the Thracian element was visible in the whole province, Mócsy 1974: 65-66.

[26] As P. Petrović and M. Vasić point out, the construction of the inland road along the Moesia Superior's frontier was one of the most demanding and difficult projects for the Romans ever, because they needed to not only build the roads, but also to improve the conditions for shipping, by making some roads which would go through the gorge of the Iron Gate as near to the banks where steep cliffs were almost vertical. In the efforts to do that, Romans had to use various construction techniques to be able to cut the roads in the rock slopes, Petrović, Vasić 1996: 18-19.

[27] Systematic archaeological excavations showed that the first phase



Localities on Danube Limes, Moesia Superior
(Mirković 2007)

of the land, like the fertile valleys, forests, mines and thermal springs, helped the province to prosper after the Dacian wars, which was mirrored in its economic growth and the founding of *municipii* and colonies in the 1st century. As in other Roman provinces, the Roman state relied on the indigenous elite to establish an efficient Roman administration.[28] Unfortunately, at the end of the 2nd century, attacks by barbarian tribes began and military, economic and social crises marked the larger part of the 3rd century, lasting until the beginning of Diocletian's reign. The period of his reign is remembered not only for the numerous reforms, but also for the renewed importance of the Central Balkan area to the Roman Empire.[29] Although Diocletian's heirs, particularly Constantine the Great with his successors, continued to dedicate attention to the further development and defence of the newly formed provinces of the Central Balkans; at the end of the 4th century, the Goths and other barbarian tribes invaded and raided the mentioned territory. The particularly forceful attacks of the Huns destroyed *castra* and settlements in the Limes and the interior of the former Moesia Superior in the middle of the 5th century. Although during Justinian's reign, the fortifications in the Danube Limes and the large Central Balkan cities were restored, the fall of the whole territory to the Avars in the middle of the 6th century was inevitable.

of Danube Limes fortifications, legionary fortresses and auxiliary camps formation in Moesia Superior, dates from the first half of the 1st century since the destruction of the first construction horizons dates to the period 68-69 and is related to the Dacian attacks on the forts situated on Danube's right bank, Petrović, Vasić 1996: 20. Although Dacian attacks in 85 brought numerous Roman army troops to Moesia, the fortification system in Danube Limes was further developed by Trajan and his successors, Dušanić 1996: 41 etc. P. Petrović and M. Vasić differentiate six construction phases of Moesia Superior's Danube Limes, with the sixth phase dating between 367 and 370 (related to the building activity of Valentinian I and Valens) and the seventh phase when fortifications were restored during the reign of Theodosius I, Petrović, Vasić 1996: 20-23.

[28] J. Šašel estimates that only after a period of three human generations, the process of Romanisation was successfully applied in the territory of the provinces Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior, Iliev 2011: 41.

[29] Diocletian finished the process of the division of Roman provinces into smaller units and in the territory of the eastern part of Moesia Superior and western Moesia Inferior new provinces Dacia Ripensis and Dacia Mediterranea were formed. On the south of Moesia Superior, the new province Dardania with the capital Niš was founded, while on the north province Moesia Prima was created. In the south of the province Dalmatia, a new province Praevalitana was formed. All these new provinces constituted Diocese of Moesiae (later Dacia), Mirković 1981: 92.

The History of the Research of Asia Minor and Syrian Religions and Cults in the Territory of the Central Balkans

The history of the research of Asia Minor and Syrian religions and cults attested in the Roman Central Balkans begins in the last decades of the 19th century, burdened by the complicated political situation in the region.[30] Several foreign travellers, impressed with the antique ruins and monuments they saw during their travels through the Balkans, wrote about them, described and drew them. Thanks to Arthur Evans, who gave his invaluable impressions about the archaeological monuments and topography of Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro[31] and Felix Kanitz who travelled all over the Balkans and left us his precious writings and drawings,[32] we have knowledge about the antique structures and monuments that are today nonexistent. Due to the initiative of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, archaeological material already discovered in different Roman localities (like Acumincum – Stari Slankamen, Taurunum – Zemun, Sremska Mitrovica – Sirmium etc.) was gathered.[33] The effort of individuals was also important, since amateurs like Ignjat Jung, who was a teacher from Sremska Mitrovica[34] or Feliks Milleker from Vršac, saved in their reports many epigraphic and archaeological monuments and objects, which are now lost or destroyed. From the last decade of the 19th century, one of the first great classicists, Nikola Vulić, sometimes with his colleagues Anton von Premerstein and Friedrich Ladek and sometimes alone,[35] every year published Roman epigraphic and archaeological monuments, including those in relation with Asia Minor and Syrian deities, providing details about their finding, which made the information invaluable. At the same time, Mihailo Valtrović collected archaeological evidence from different historical periods and started the first archaeological excavations with Miloje Vasić in Viminacium. The papers of Carl Patsch about Roman monuments from the province of Dalmatia were, from the last decade of the 19th century, published almost yearly in the journal Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen aus Bosnien und der Herzegowina. They are still of great importance, especially in the context of the funerary monuments with the figure of *Attis tristis,* which are today considered destroyed or lost.

The period between the First and Second World Wars was a time with few archaeological excavations. Still, archaeologists and amateurs continued to gather Roman monuments and objects (mainly found by chance) and some of them started systematic excavations in localities such as Mediana, Brzi brod and the necropolis of Jagodin Mala in Niš (Naissus), where important monuments like the torso of Magna Mater statue were found. Nikola Vulić continued with his work in Macedonia, collecting Roman monuments and inscriptions, but he also started excavations of the Antique theatre in Skoplje (Scupi).[36] Rastislav Marić's publication from 1933, about Antique cults in the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, represented the first serious study about Greek, Roman and indigenous, but also Oriental, cults in the larger part of the Roman Central Balkans territory.[37]

The situation regarding the progress of not only the new archaeological excavations, but also published works, became considerably better after World War II. First systematic and planned archaeological research began, in parallel with the publishing of articles with the topic of Asia Minor and Syrian religions and / or cults. In his publication from 1957, about the hoard from Tekija, Đorđe Mano-Zisi describes, analyses and interprets two silver plates with representations of Magna Mater and Sabazius.[38] The first short studies that paid more attention to the Asia Minor cults began to appear in the early 1960s – Sofija Kojić gathered and discussed funerary monuments with figures of *Attis tristis*,[39] the cults of Magna Mater and Jupiter Dolichenus were analysed in the PhD thesis of Ljubica Zotović from 1964 (published by Brill in 1966)[40] and two years later, Dušanka Vučković-Todorović submitted a report about the archaeological excavations she led in the locality of Brza Palanka (Egeta), where a *sacrarium* of Jupiter Dolichenus was discovered.[41] Sofija Kojić tackled the question of Theos Hypsistos' cult in her

[30] In this concise review of the so-far existing bibliography about the Asia Minor and Syrian religions and cults in Roman Central Balkans, I will omit individual articles or catalogue entries in which archaeological monuments reflecting mentioned religions or cults have been quoted, but not analysed or discussed.

[31] Evans 1883.

[32] Kanitz 1861; 1868; 1882; 1892; 1904.

[33] Much of the gathered material ended up in the museums of Zagreb, Temišvar and Budapest, Garašanin 1978: 166.

[34] Miladinović-Radmilović, Radmilović 2015.

[35] Вулић Н. 1909, 109-191; Вулић Н. 1931, 4-259; Вулић Н. 1933, 3-89; Вулић Н. 1934, 29-84; Вулић Н. 1941-48, 1-335; Вулић Н., Премерштајн А. ф. 1900, 15-58; Вулић Н., Ладек Ф., Премерштајн А. ф. 1903, 43-88. For the full bibliography of N. Vulić see Marić 1959: XV – 1.

[36] Garašanin 1978: 167.

[37] Marić 1933.

[38] Mano-Zisi: 1957.

[39] Kojić 1961: 1-47.

[40] Zotović: 1964; Zotović 1966.

[41] Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 173-181

article about a votive monument from Pirot,[42] while Ljubica Zotović published two articles dealing with the penetration, diffusion and disappearance of Oriental cults in the territory of Yugoslavia and representations of young men identified as *Attis tristis* and the winged genii of death.[43] Radmila Ajdić published a gold ring with a syncretistic representation of the god Sabazius from a Late Antique grave in Niš,[44] while Ljubica Zotović again turned to the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus.[45] Two important studies appear in 1977 concerning Asia Minor and Syria in the area of northern Macedonia by Siegrid Düll and Bosnia and Hercegovina by Enver Imamović.[46] In the same year, Ljubica Zotović's article about the cult of Jupiter Turmasgades in Viminacium also appeared.[47] In Aleksandar Jovanović's article, a syncretistic representation of the god Sabazius from a gold ring discovered in Niš is revised, while the subject of Michael Speidel's paper is a votive monument dedicated to Asclepius and the genius of Jupiter Dolichenus.[48] In 1980, Petar Selem and Julijan Medini presented archaeological monuments from the provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia, relating them to analogous monuments from the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans, while in the unfortunately never published doctoral thesis of Julijan Medini, the religions and cults of Asia Minor attested in the province of Dalmatia are thoughtfully and thoroughly analysed and interpreted.[49] In her publication about Oriental cults in Moesia Inferior and Thrace, Margarita Tatcheva-Hitova also analyses Asia Minor and Syrian cults, while Julijan Medini dedicates a new article solely to the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus.[50] In the works of Dragoljub Bojović about Roman gems and cameos, representations of the gods Attis and Sol were presented, and Julijan Medini turns to the research of the Asia Minor deity Men and its traces in the province of Dalmatia.[51] The iconography of the goddess Magna Mater in the territory of Macedonia was the theme of Viktorija Sokolovska's paper, while the authors V. Velkov and V. Gerasimova-Tomova discuss Asia Minor and Syrian cults in Thrace and Moesia Inferior, with analogies from the Central Balkan Roman provinces.[52] Studying the iconography of silver plates from the Tekija hoard, Aleksandar Jovanović offers a new interpretation of the images of Magna Mater and Sabazius, while Maja Parović-Pešikan publishes a most interesting article about the cult of Jupiter Melanus in Ulpiana.[53] The question of Palmyrene funerary monuments from Singidunum is debated by I. Popović, while Tatjana Cvjetićanin writes about Amphipolis' teracottas of the god Attis, from the National Museum in Belgrade.[54] In Miodrag Tomović's publication about Roman sculpture in Moesia Superior, the author analyses and interprets the statues of Magna Mater, Jupiter Dolichenus and Sabazius, while the cult of the god Mēn from Macedonian territory is, among other cults, the subject of the doctoral thesis of Nade Proeva.[55] Among different kinds of objects from antler and bone, Sofija Petković also mentions needles with their head in the shape of Sabazius' votive hands, while Marijana Ricl deals with the concept of sin and confession inscriptions from Asia Minor in her publication.[56] A new interpretation of funerary monuments in the shape of *cippi* with the figures of *Attis tristis* appeared in the publication of Radmila Zotović in 1995, while Aleksandar Jovanović writes about the cult of Theos Hypsistos in the territory of the Central Balkans.[57] The subject of stone lion statues found in different localities of western Serbia, Belgrade (Singidunum) and Viminacium (Požarevac), which could have been connected to the Metroac cult (or perhaps the cult of the god Mithras?), has been the focus in several articles by Radmila Zotović and Stefan Pop-Lazić.[58] In her synthesis about attested cults in Viminacium in Antiquity, Lj. Zotovic touches the question of Magna Mater's cult, while in the catalogue of the exhibition 'Античка бронза Сингидунума (Antique bronze of Singidunum)', several statuettes of Asia Minor and Syrian deities are presented.[59] In an article about Oriental cults in Dardania, Zef Mirdita discusses Asia Minor and Syrian cults as well, while the doctoral thesis of Anemari Bugarski-Mesdijan offers the author' views on Oriental deities in the territory of the Roman province of Dalmatia.[60] Some interesting evidence about the priest of Jupiter Dolichenus from the Viminacium area was published in 2004.[61] Never before published gems and cameos with representations of Graeco-Roman and Oriental gods and goddesses, including Magna Mater, Sabazius, Artemis of Ephesus, Dea Syria and Sol, are the subject of the unpublished doctoral thesis of Ivana Novović-Kuzmanović, while in her publication about the cult of the god Jupiter in Moesia Superior, Aleksandra Bošković-Robert presents a corpus of god monuments and its interpretation, including the monuments of Asia Minor local deities identified with the Roman god Jupiter.[62] In his article about funerary praxis in Moesia Superior from the

[42] Којић 1963: 223-230.
[43] Зотовић 1969: 431-440.
[44] Ајдић 1971: 33-45.
[45] Зотовић 1971: 59-65.
[46] Düll 1977; Imamović 1977.
[47] Зотовић 1977: 33-40.
[48] Јовановић 1977: 87-90; Speidel 1980: 182-186.
[49] Selem 1980; Medini 1980: 67-88; Medini 1981.
[50] Тачева-Хитова 1982; Medini 1982: 53-90.
[51] Бојовић 1984-1985, 139-152; Medini 1987: 175-187.
[52] Соколовска 1988: 113-126; Velkov, Gerassimova-Tomova 1989: 1318-1361.
[53] Јовановић 1990: 29-36; Parović-Pešikan 1990: 607-616.
[54] Popović 1993: 71-76; Цвјетићанин 1992: 349-358.
[55] Tomović 1993; Proeva 1992.
[56] Petković 1995; Ricl 1995.
[57] Зотовић 1995; Jovanović 1996: 128-134.
[58] Зотовић 1994: 123-131; Зотовић 2004: 21-29; Зотовић 2003: 87-96; Pop-Lazić 2002:7-100; Гојгић, Вуjадиновић 2019: 7-24.
[59] Zotović 1996: 127-137; Античка бронза Сингидунума 1997.
[60] Mirdita 2001: 37-54; Bugarski-Mesdjian 2003.
[61] Petrović 2004: 217-224.
[62] Нововић-Кузмановић 2005; Bošković-Robert 2006.

1st to the 3rd century, Aleksandar Jovanović also encompasses the cult of Jupiter Melanus.[63] The doctoral thesis of Aleksandra Nikoloska regarding the cults of Cybele / Magna Mater and Attis in Croatia, deals with the iconography and aspects of deities, while the unpublished doctoral thesis of P. Karković Takalić analyses mystery religions in the province of Dalmatia.[64] A significant publication of Lj. Mandić appeared in 2015, encompassing the territory of south-western Serbia in the context of attested antique necropolises, discussing the topography and iconography of funerary monuments.[65]

Over the years, in different articles and publications, the author of this book has tried to shed some clearer light on the iconography, different aspects of veneration, ritual practices, dedicants and sanctuaries of Asia Minor and Syrian deities in different Central Balkan localities.[66] This book was written out of a sincere wish and effort to gather all evidence about Asia Minor and Syrian religions and cults from the Roman Central Balkans into one place and, through their documenting, analysis and interpretation, offer a more accurate view on the local context in which these religions and cults appeared, flourished and, in the end, vanished, on the mentioned territory in Antiquity.

[63] Jovanović 2006: 23-44.
[64] Nikoloska 2007; Karković-Takalić 2019.
[65] Мандић 2015.
[66] Gavrilović 2015a; Petković, Gavrilović Vitas, Miladinović-Radmilović, Ilijić 2016.

Cultural Influences and Romanisation

As in other parts of the Roman Empire, the conquest of the Central Balkan territory by the Romans led to the inevitable Romanisation of the indigenous population, which covered not only the larger centres that later attained a municipal or colonial status, but also, to a certain extant, smaller rural areas. In earlier literature, the prevailing opinion was that the process of Romanisation was introduced by Roman soldiers, veterans, administratives, merchants and artisans to the indigenous population, which was to be educated and civilised from scratch. However, archaeological evidence shows that Hellenised proto-urban centres in Dardania, like the locality of Krševica, were formed and developed under strong Greek influences, as were several other important centres where a prior practice existed regardless of the process of Roman urbanisation.[67] Although some urban centres of the Central Balkan provinces were founded by Roman veterans and did not have a direct connection to the older settlements, like Ratiaria for example, they still had traces of the previously settled indigenous population at the site or in its vicinity. As the main goal of the Roman conquerors was to place the overtaken population into a specific administrative and legal framework and to include them in further development, although complex, the organisation of Moesia Superior's residents was similar to the urbanisation of the neighbouring provinces.[68] However, the development of the province and the degree to which urbanisation was achieved, were another matter. The territory of Moesia Superior, as has already been mentioned, was divided into four administrative units; the indigenous population inhabited quite large territories, the boundaries of which did not coincide with the borders that existed between tribal communities in the pre-Roman period. However, the new organisation into *civitates* resulted in further internal divisions into: *pagi, vici,* etc. and the provincial governor had to rely on the distinguished members of the indigenous population, to whom a number of benefits were given for them to deal with and control certain tasks that would allow undisturbed everyday life in the province. The administrative institutions in future *coloniae* and *municipia* were the *duumviri*, *aediles*, *quaestores* and *decuriones*, which all belonged to the *magistratus minores ordinarii*, however, no inscriptions or ancient sources provide information regarding their rights and obligations in Moesia Superior.[69] The earliest towns, like Scupi or Ratiaria, were founded by imperial decree at the sites of legionary camps, while other cities attained their municipal or colonial statues as their urban development progressed.[70] Beside these two earliest founded cities, in contrast to other Roman provinces, it is possible to distinguish only two major phases of the development of Moesia Superior's cities: the first phase is dated to the 2nd century, when municipal status was given to the civilian settlements formed close to military camps. Cities like Singidunum, Viminacium and Remesiana became *municipii* under the reign of the emperors Traian or Hadrian, while Margum, Ulpiana, Horreum Margi and Naissus were given municipal status under Marcus Aurelius. It is presumed that Municipium DD (DD probably stands for Dardanorum) near Sočanica, was granted the status of municipium during the reign of the Severi dynasty.[71] Only two cities in Moesia Superior, Viminacium and Singidunum, became colonies in time, most probably

[67] Mladenović 2012: 22. The locality Kale Krševica is situated in the South Morava river valley near the village Krševica (south-eastern Serbia) and represents the settlement from the 4th and first decades of the 3rd century BC. The settlement itself was built under strong Greek influence and while it existed, it maintained close contact with Macedonia and Greece, Popović 2009: 141-153; Popović 2012: 11-51.

[68] D. Mladenović and C. Szabó observe rightly that in the context of the wider state policy of the urbanisation of the Middle and Lower Danube by the Roman state, romanisation of the province Moesia was not much different than in neighbouring provinces, Mladenović 2012: 23-24; Szabó 2018: 11-12.

[69] Two senior magistrates, *duumviri,* were equivalent to the Roman consuls and were in charge of the autonomy of the colonies for the period of one year and held administrative and judicial power, but also organized the work of the city council, various priestly colleges etc. The *quinquennales* had similar duties as censors in Rome – they were elected every five years, dealt with financial priorities of the municipality etc. The *aediles* were similar to the praetors in Rome and their duties encompassed the public policy, supervision of markets, roads, buildings, baths, the provision of supplies, organization of public games etc. The *quaestor* cared for the proper distribution and for preventing any losses and fraud in finances, for maintaining of the urban infrastructure (streets, walls, roads) and cared for public initiatives, like for example the erecting of statues of persons who contributed to the city. The *decuriones* acted as advisory persons, who monitored how the public property was cared for, but also in some cases had judicial functions, Iliev 2011: 42-43.

[70] Scupi was founded by imperial decree during the Flavian dynasty, *IMS* VI, num. 15, 42, 46, 66; Ratiaria became a colony under the reign of emperor Trajan, most probably in 106, *CIL* III, 14217, 14499; Mócsy 1974: 115-116. The inscriptions dedicated by the veterans of Scupi showed that in the moment of the colony's founding, beside the veterans from legion VII Claudia, legion V Alaudae and legion V Macedonica, veterans from legion IV Macedonica were also present, Ferjančić 2002: 76. Ratiaria was located near the village of Arčar, in Vidin area and was founded after the end of the 2nd Dacian war, in the period between 106 and 112. It is thought that veterans of legions IV Flavia and VII Claudia participated in the founding of *colonia Ratiaria*, but S. Ferjančić suggests that only a small number of veterans from the two above mentioned legions was present, Ibid: 79-80.

[71] Mirković 1968; Mirković 1981; Mócsy 1974: 213 etc.

during the reign of Emperor Gordian in 239.[72] All the mentioned cities did not have large areas within the walls (from around 20 ha to 60 ha), some of them were fortified and it is presumed, from the so-far known topography of excavated localities, that they were built using a regular architectural plan, with all the public and private buildings that an average Roman centre would have.[73] The Roman army was behind all major works, particularly waterworks, at least until the late 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century, when euergetism became prominent in Moesia Superior, which coincides with the visits of emperors through these parts and with the exploitation of the mines.[74] Together with the development of the cities, agrarian and rural mining settlements also thrived in their own way - positioned mostly in river valleys, near main roads or in mining areas. The majority of the population worked in the fields, with cattle, with pottery or in mines and one section of them was also employed in the imperial or private domains and villas in the suburbs of the cities.[75] Most of the *villae rusticae* date from the 3rd and the 4th century, with the earliest ones built near bigger centres or in the mining areas, probably belonging to the local procurators of the mines, persons of high status and economic means, of whom some were, in S. Dušanić's opinion, in Septimius Severus' period, at least in Municipium DD (Sočanica), knights.[76] The second phase of the development of major urban centres belongs to the period of Late Antiquity. Centres like Naissus began to be intensively built and rebuilt and then became the capital of the new province of Dardania, at which time the city became a more important centre of influence for the Roman state. Alas, Naissus was later also an infamous example of a Roman city, which was completely destroyed by the Huns in 447, described in detail by Priscus. Naissus is mentioned as one of 70 cities (including Serdica, Marcianopolis, etc.) that were completely devastated.[77] Before later attacks of Avars, at the end of the 6th century, most urban centres in Moesia Superior were abandoned, with the population mostly living outside of the cities, which, in time, transformed into smaller fortress-towns.[78]

The importance of roads and inland waterways through which cultural and religious influences could come from one part of the Empire to the other is very significant in the context of the penetration and diffusion of Asia Minor and Syrian cults in the territory of the Central Balkans. As M. Mirković rightly observes, there were several important roads in the territory that connected it with the western parts as well as with the eastern parts of the Roman Empire. Italy was connected to the East through Pannonia, reaching the Danube at Belgrade (Singidunum). The second important road point was the capital of the province, Viminacium, from which roads radiated in different directions: in an eastern direction from the camp, one road led along the Danube, while a southern road from Viminacium led towards Niš (Naissus).[79] The so-called *via militaris* built in 33, led from Singidunum, Viminacium, along the Morava Valley, through Naissus and further to Serdica, Philippopolis, and Adrianopolis to Constantinopolis. As much as inland roads were important, they were of secondary importance for connecting Roman provinces with the Central Balkan territory – fluvial routes were more important and cheaper.[80] Whenever it was possible, all transportation was done by waterways – beside the Danube, other important rivers were the Morava, Ibar, Mlava, Nišava, Timok, etc. The most important ports were in Viminacium and Singidunum, while smaller ports have been archaeologically attested in Tekija (Transdierna), Čezava (Novae), Karataš (Statio Cataractarum Dianae), Brze Palanke (Egeta), Prahovo (Aquae), Sapaja and Hajdučka vodenica.[81]

I have already mentioned the importance and wealth of the Central Balkan mines and quarries and their significance for the Roman state. The exploitation of mine ores probably started in the last decades of the 1st century and there were two mining districts: Dardanian (*metalli Dardanici*) and a northern district (which was probably known as *metalli Ulpiani*, later *metalli Aureliani*).[82] Epigraphic monuments and *itineraria* show that the settlements in the Dardanian territory were founded along the main roads and in mining districts. As S. Dušanić emphasises, Roman mining in

[72] Mirković 1981: 81.

[73] Most of the mentioned centres lie under modern cities and therefore the archaeological excavations are not only scarce but also quite complex to perform. Cities like for example Niš (Naissus) lied on the territory around 20 ha, Petrović 1976, while Viminacium presented the largest centre, encompassing around 51 ha within the walls. All these centres had forum, temples, monumental public buildings (*horrea*, public and private *thermae* etc.) with hypocaust heating and were decorated with mosaics and sculptures, theatre (only in Scupi from the period of Hadrian's reign) and amphitheatre (discovered in Viminacium, Bogdanović: 2019), Mladenović 2012: 24-26.

[74] For more details see Mladenović 2011: 173-193; Dušanić 2010.

[75] Here, I am not only referring to the imperial domains from late antiquity such are Felix Romuliana (Gamzigrad near Zaječar) or Mediana (Niš), where different buildings of economic nature (*horrea*, workshops for pottery/ tools/ weapons, *thermae* etc.) existed and provided the administrators who worked in the estates and the army stationed nearby.

[76] Dušanić 2010: 662-663.

[77] Петровић 1976: 41-43.

[78] Mladenović 2012: 50.

[79] M. Mirković summarizes important communications in Moesia Superior in six points: along the Danube (inland and fluvial way), crossing the Danube – the roads in plain of Banat, the road from Viminacium to Dardania, south of Naissus along the Južna Morava valley, southwest of Naissus – connection Lissus – Scupi and Scupi – Stobi and finally, road east from Naissus – towards Bela Palanka (Remesiana), Mirković 2019: 237-251.

[80] Mócsy 1974: 45.

[81] The ports in Viminacium, Novae and Aque were separated from the fortifications, while ports in other localities were built near the military camps, Петровић 1991: 209.

[82] *Metalli Ulpiani* (later *metalla Aureliana*) encompassed mines in Kosmaj, Avala, Rudnik, Pek and Timok, Dušanić 2010: 473-532.

the Danubian provinces was quite a complex and well organised system by the Roman state, which was well maintained and which effected the organisation of *portorium* and the process of the Romanisation of the indigenous population. The presence of immigrants from Asia Minor and Syria in the mining districts of the Central Balkans resulted in inevitable interactions between the indigenous residents and the population of Oriental origin, who left theirs traces in known epigraphic and archaeological evidence.

As in every Roman province, the indigenous and Romanised population was differentiated by their social and economic status. In the beginning, the Romans presented urban aristocracy, while during the 2nd and 3rd century, the Romanised indigenous population (mostly gaining their citizenship under the reigns of the emperors Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius), also becomes very prominent in the military and administrative positions in the Central Balkans' larger urban centres.[83] Because of the understanding of how Asia Minor and Syrian religions and cults were accepted and existed in the territory, it is important to remember that the Central Balkans was a very transitional area, where people of different origin and provenience came to, lived or passed through, leaving behind them traces of their cultures. However, until the end of Antiquity, the indigenous residents mostly lived in the villages or smaller places, being ignorant of Latin and staying faithful to their own spiritual culture, which is attested by characteristic syncretism between unknown indigenous deities and deities from other cultures, like for example the god Attis and the gods Silvanus, Dionysus/Liber or Mithras.

[83] Mirković 1981: 83.

I Asia Minor Religions and Cults

1. Magna Mater

1.1. Magna Mater Cult in Graeco-Roman Culture

The cult of the goddess known in Roman religion as Magna Mater, is one of the oldest cults in the world.[84] The complex question of the cult's nature in Asia Minor has often been discussed in the scholarly literature.[85] Without entering deeper into the question of the continuity between the cult of the Mother Goddess from Asia Minor and the cult of the goddess in Greek culture, that is in Roman culture, I will, instead, focus on the most significant aspects of the Phrygian Mother Goddess's cult, important for the later context and understanding of the cult.[86] The cult of the goddess is known from the 1st millennium BC and her name *Matar* is confirmed on many paleo-Phrygian inscriptions from rock sanctuary facades (or niches and altars), the earliest of which dating from the end of the 7th century BC.[87] With the name *Matar,* beside the epithet *areyastin,* the epithet *kubileya* or *kubeleya* is present in two inscriptions, from which the goddess' Greek name Kybele is derived.[88] This Phrygian Mother Goddess, whom Strabo calls *φρυγίαν θεον μεγαλην*,[89] did not differ from the Greek and Roman Mother Goddess only by name, but also by the iconography and the places of worship. Phrygians presented the deity frontally, as a standing mature woman, dressed in a long dress belted around the waist, with a *polos* headdress and a veil. The goddess would usually hold a bird of prey, lions, a bowl or a round object – probably a pomegranate.[90] Comparing the goddess's monuments from central and western Phrygia, it is noticeable that on the presentations from central Phrygia, Kybele is shown with birds of prey (eagle or hawk), while on the reliefs from western Phrygia, the goddess is presented with lions.[91] The custom of showing the Phrygian Mother goddess in a gateway combined with the fact that her monuments were frequently found on the periphery of the locality (beside its walls), clearly imply the goddess's function as the protectress of the city and the city's walls.[92] Thus presented, the Phrygian Mother Goddess was also the goddess of Nature, wild beasts, a forceful and mighty protectress of everything on Earth, and of settlement walls and boundaries, but obviously not primarily a gentle and nurturing goddess who symbolised fertility and motherhood.[93]

[84] The cult of Mother Goddess worshipped as the mother of the nature and fertility, mother of gods, men, animals and plants, the goddess of light, but also of the underworld, is known from the earliest cultures of Asia Minor, Crete and Greece, as the cult of Mother Goddess, Graillot 1912: 1-13; Vermaseren 1977: 9; Naumann 1983; Roller 1999: 1-7; Borgeaud 2004: 1-3.

[85] Without any ambition to cover all the articles and studies which dealt in the past with the mentioned subject, I'll just turn towards the most important bibliographical references: Graillot 1912; Showerman 1901; Cumont 1929; Carcopino 1942; Sfameni Gasparro 1973; *CCCA I-VII* 1977-1987; Vermaseren 1977; Bremer 1979; Naumann 1983; Thomas 1984; Borgeaud 1996; Turcan 1996; Roller 1999; Alvar 2008; Dubosson-Sbriglione 2018.

[86] Very obvious analogies in the iconography of the figures of women from Çatalhöyük (seated goddess on the throne flanked with two leopards) and Hacilar dated around 6000 BC, with later presentations of Phrygian Kybele can't be coincidental and interestingly this continuity is confirmed in the localities from the area where later centers of worshipping Phrygian Mother Goddess, existed, Vermaseren 1977: 14-15; Roller 1999: 37.

[87] The name of the goddess *Matar* is incised on cult facades, niches, altars or other rock monuments where the goddess' place of worship was situated. It's translation probably meant *mother,* which clearly implies that the Phrygian deity was considered Mother Goddess, which corresponds with later names of the goddess in Greek and Roman historical sources (*Meter, Mater, Magna Mater),* Roller 1999: 65; Naumann 1983: 41-42. P. Borgeaud dates the earliest sanctuaries of the goddess into the end of the 7th century BC, Borgeaud 2004: 4. For the discussion about the dating of the oldest paleo-Phrygian inscriptions see Borgeaud 2004: 135, ft. 18.

[88] The Phrygian Mother Goddess is mentioned under the name Kybele in Greek culture from the middle of the 6th century BC and she is known by that name in most of the Greek, Roman and Byzantine historical sources. Whether the name Kybele was derived as Strabo comments from the name of the mountain (Kybelon) or as Ovid thinks from the name of the place, it is most probable that the goddess' name was originally an epithet, Strabo, *Geogr.* XII.5.I-3; Ovid, *Fasti* IV 363-364. F. Naumann states that other names by which the goddess was known in Ionian centres and Lydia, like Kubeke, Kubebe (*Κυβήκη, Κυβήβη*) were actually precursors of the name Kybele, Naumann 1983: 18 etc. M. J. Vermaseren's opinion about analogies between Hittite goddess Kubaba (Mistress of the land of Carchemish in 1400-1300 BC) and Kybele is rejected by L. E. Roller who finds nothing mutual between two goddesses and emphasises that in Graeco-Roman culture, Kubaba was identified with goddess Artemis or Hecate and not with the goddess Kybele, Vermaseren 1977: 23-24; Roller 1999: 47.

[89] Strabo, *Geogr.* X 3.12.

[90] Goddess' presentations from central Phrygia are different compared to her presentations in western parts of Phrygia. For example, in monuments from Gordion, Ankara, Etlik and Boğazköy, the Mother Goddess wears long belted dress, with polos and veil on her head, presented inside the doorway, Naumann 1983: 294, num. 18, 295, num. 19, 20 and 23. Chronologically, the goddess' sanctuary from Boğazköy is dated in the 8th century BC, while other iconographical presentations of Kybele date from the 7th century BC, Roller 1999: 81-83. Some of the monuments are of a unique iconography – thus the presentation from Aslankaya shows the goddess holding a lion cub, while two lions of her size placing their front paw on the goddess's head, Naumann 1983: 293, num. 11, Tafel 4, 2; 4,3.

[91] On some monuments, like on the monument from Boğazköy, Kybele is presented with two small youthful male attendants. F. Naumann identifies them as precursors of Cybele's Greek companions, while L. E. Roller thinks that they are attendants of Mother Goddess, Roller 1999: 110.

[92] Ibid: 110-111.

[93] Unique find of an ivory statuette of Mother Goddess holding a little girl by her hand and carrying on her shoulder a little boy is known

Greek culture came into contact with the Phrygian Mother Goddess during the early 6th century BC, a fact that epigraphic and archaeological monuments from Greek cities on the west coast of Anatolia attest to. The goddess's cult penetrated the Greek inland and Greek cities in Sicily, Italy and southern France and, until the 4th century BC, she was known in every Greek city.[94] Greek writers call the goddess Cybele, while on votive monuments she is named *μητηρ, μητηρ θεών*, the Mother of the gods.[95] Due to certain analogies, she has been identified with the Greek goddesses Rhea, Gaia, Hera, Demeter and Aphrodite and even sometimes called by their names.[96] The earliest monuments of Cybele in the Greek cities of Asia Minor are several marble reliefs from Miletos, dated to the 6th century BC, where the goddess is presented frontally, standing inside a naiskos, which probably presented a Greek type of frame instead of Anatolian monumental facades.[97] These marble plates presumably represented votive offerings to the goddess and they show her completely Hellenized image: the goddess's dress and attributes are typically Greek, with one hand holding the end of the chiton, while in some reliefs in her other hand she holds on her chest an oval object similar to a pomegranate.[98] Certain iconographical changes can be observed in Cybele's presentations from the middle of the 6th century BC, when she is first shown sitting on a throne, dressed in a long chiton, with a crown and veil on her head and her hands in her lap (sometimes holding a small lion in her lap).[99] In the late 6th century BC, one important iconographical element appears in Cybele's presentations – a hand drum, *tympanum*, which is usually shown on or beside the goddess's left shoulder.[100] During the 5th and the 4th century BC, Cybele is generally known as *μητηρ θεών*, less frequently as *Μήτηρ Μεγάλη* and in Sophocles' tragedy 'Philoctetes' and Euripides' plays 'Hippolytus' and 'Helen', a new name for the goddess appears; *Μήτηρ ορεία,* Mother of the mountains. The iconography of the goddess is mostly unchanged – Cybele is represented frontally, seated on a throne, with a low headdress on her head (sometimes a veil too), in a chiton with a himation over her shoulders, holding a tympanum in her left hand and a libation bowl, *phiale,* in her right hand.[101] Sometimes, she holds a small lion figure in her lap, but more frequently her throne is usually flanked by two lions. The most famous statue of this iconographic type of Cybele is certainly the sculpture of Agorakritos of Paros, Pheidias' pupil, who sculpted the statue for the goddess's temple on the Athenian Agora of the Metroon.[102] The Metroon was built on the western part of the Agora, next to the *Bouleuterion* (where council members presided), probably at the end of the 5th century BC. There is a legend ascribed to the foundation of the Metroon in Athens, about which we find out from Julian's 'Hymn to the Mother of the gods' and from Photius' Lexicon. Both authors describe the events connected to the goddess's priest, known as *metragyrtes* ('begger for the Mother'),[103] that preceded the laying of the temple's foundations;[104] however,

from a Phrygian grave near Elmali, Ibid: 104.

[94] The earliest mention of the goddess in Greek literature is from the XIV Homer' hymn (probably the last quarter of the 6th century BC), Ibid: 119, 122-123.

[95] One of the earliest dedications to the goddess in Greece is known from a fragmented votive monument, found near the Metroon on Athene's Agora, dated to the 4th century BC, with the presentation of Cybele inside the naiskos with partial inscription Κρίτων μητηρ θεών [---], *CCCA* II, 7-8, num. 3.

[96] Greek poets, like Hipponax and Telestes equate Cybele with goddess Rhea, while Euripides implies that the ecstatic element of singing and dancing can be attributed to both of them, Roller 1999: 121-122; 170-172. M. J. Vermaseren finds the connection between two goddesses in their' merit for wheat and fruit growth, Vermaseren 1977: 33. Hesiod is the first to associate Cybele and goddess Gea, while Solon thought of Gaia as equivalent to Cybele and Rhea, Roller 1999: 170. Goddess Cybele was early connected with supreme Greek goddess Hera and from the late 6th century BC with Demeter too (in Demeter temple in Gela, a votive statuette of Demeter was found seating on the throne with a lion in her lap), Ibid: 175. Pausanias writes that on the southern slope of the Acropolis, a group of connected cults of goddesses existed, starting with the temple of Themis, then Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho, Ge Kourorophos and Demeter Chloe, Munn 2006: 339.

[97] Naumann 1983: 110-117, num. 37-43. Different authors discussed the relation between the Anatolian monuments and the Greek *naiskoi* and although some scholars claim that both types existed as separate cult monuments it is possible, as B. Bogh suggests, that *naiskos* as a frame for Cybele's image, represented the Mediterranean characteristic, Bøgh 2012: 39-42.

[98] Ibid: num. 39, Tafel 13, 2, num. 41, Tafel 13, 4, num. 43, Tafel, 14, 2.

[99] This iconographic type of Cybele's presentations was transferred from Asia Minor' cities like Smyrna, Miletos, Ephesus and Kyme to the islands of Samos, Chios, Thasos and Amorgos and further spread go Sicily, cities in southern Italy etc. Ibid: 124-136, num. 43-68, 113-117; Roller 131-133.

[100] Votive reliefs from Thasos and Ephesus count among the earliest presentations of the goddess with tympanum, Ibid: 136, 303, num. 64.

[101] Roller 1999: 148.

[102] Agorakritos of Paros was one of the Pheidias' pupils and he is considered to be the sculptor of the statue of Cybele, modelled after 430 BC, which stood at the Metroon, goddess's temple. Agorakritos' sculpture of Cybele presented the goddess seating on the throne flanked with lions, with tympanum in one hand and a phiale in the other hand. Although Arrian and Pausanias write that Pheidias is the sculptor of the statue, Pliny implies that the sculptor was Agorakritos, Polit 1990: 67. Thankfully to the stylistic characteristics of Agorakritos' statue Nemesis, modelled for her sanctuary in Rhamnous, the opinion of his authorship prevails in contemporary literature, Borgeaud 2004: 13. Unfortunately, neither Arrian, Pausanias or Pliny describe the Cybele's sculpture in detail, therefore it is unknown whether she had a crown and/or veil on her head. However, M. J. Vermaseren thinks that based on the majority of Cybele's monuments (a few hundred) found on the area of Agora, on which the goddess has a crown (polos) on her head and her hair is done in two long plaits, Agorakritos' statue was similar or the same, Vermaseren 1977: 72.

[103] *Metragyrtai* or *menagyrtai* were travelling eunuch priests who begged in the name of the Mother of the Gods in Greek centres in Asia Minor, Greece and southern Italy and because of that were treated with contempt, Burkert 1987: 35. The term *metragyrtai* is also used for the travelling priests of Dea Syria, Bowden 2010: 97.

[104] The legend about why and how the Metroon was built describes how certain priest of the Mother of the Gods (Julian calls him Gallus, while Photius writes about him as *Mētragyrtēs)* came to Athens and started to initiate women in the rites of the goddess. That aroused the fury of the Athenians who killed the priest and threw his dead body in the *barathron* (executioner's pit). Soon afterwards, the plague broke out in Athens and the citizens received the oracle upon which they should build the Council House on the very spot where they

the legend itself is differently dated by contemporary scholars to the late 6th century BC, in 430 BC.[105] Some authors do not think that the placement of the Metroon inside the Bouleuterion[106] was a sheer coincidence, but attribute it to Cybele's symbolism as the goddess of justice and the protectress of the judicial system in Athens.[107] M. J. Vermaseren presumes that several private temples of the goddess existed in the port of Piraeus, built in the 4th century BC.[108] Outside Athens, temples of the goddess are attested in Olympia, Akria, Corinth and a private shrine at Thebes. In Delphi, Cybele was presented in the frieze of the Treasury of Siphnos, as one of the goddesses in the battle against the Giants, while her cult was certainly known in Eleusis, Lebadea, Epidaurus and Eretria, since her statuettes, reliefs and inscriptions dedicated to her were found there.[109] Not much is known about the practicing of Cybele's cult in Greece – her festivities were held twice per year, in spring and in summer.[110] During the spring festivities, the goddess was offered a kind of porridge made from boiled milk and wheat, which was perhaps also eaten by Cybele's worshipers.[111] Pindar describes that 'the girls celebrated the goddess by night, as a mighty deity', therefore, it can be presumed that the spring festivities were held at night.[112] The summer festivities in the goddess's honour were celebrated in Athens, Thebes and Rhodes, during July/August and honouring Cybele, her worshippers also asked her for rain and better weather, believing that she controlled Nature.[113]

During Hellenistic times, the iconography of Cybele did not change drastically, but archaeological and votive monuments from Asia Minor and Greece imply the complete Hellenisation of the goddess' image.[114] There were several important centres of Cybele's worship, one being Cyzicus, where a temple of the goddess existed, but also Pergamon in the course of the 3rd century BC, where she was honoured as the protectress of the city and city walls.[115] In this context, the goddess's principal sanctuaries in both centres were situated outside the city area, with deity's cult lasting in Cyzicus around a thousand years, with a goddess called *Meter Patroie* ('ancestral mother').[116] The main sanctuary of the Mother of the Gods, situated outside of Pergamon's walls, was considered very precious and important by all Pergamon rulers, particularly those from the Attalid dynasty.[117] Another significant city for the goddess' cult was Ilium, the site of ancient Troy, where she was known as *Meter Idaia*, named after the mountain of Ida. Pessinus, known as the sacred city of the Mother of the gods, held great importance for Cybele's cult during the Hellenistic period too. Soon, the city became the centre of attention of the Attalid kings from Pergamon, which can be best perceived in the correspondence between the Attalid kings and Cybele's priests from Pessinus,[118]

killed Cybele's priest. Athenians did as the oracle commanded and dedicated the building to the goddess, putting in it a statue of the killed priest. Since then, the citizens of Athens used the Metroon as an archive building for depositing the laws, Munn 2006: 58-62. The word 'agyrtes' designated an itinerant religious figure, Bowden 2010: 96.

[105] Roller 1996: 319.

[106] Archaeological excavations led by H. A. Thompson showed that on the south-western part of the Agora, a small Metroon was built in the 5th century BC, which was destroyed by the Persians in 480/479 BC, so the temple of Cybele was transferred to the Bouleuterion. Famous Agorakritos' statue of Cybele was situated in the old Bouleuterion and in the third quarter of the 3rd century BC, a new Metroon was built (destroyed in 267 BC), Vermaseren 1977: 32-34. However, G. Kuhn and J. M. Camp revised the chronology of H. A. Thompson concerning the phases of building and destruction of the Metroon: at the end of the 6th century BC or at the beginning of the 5th century BC, the Bouleuterion was built where the laws of Athens were deposited. Little afterwards, a small temple of Cybele, the Metroon, was built but it wasn't restored after the Persians' destruction. Between 415 and 406 BC, beside the old Bouleuterion, a new Bouleuterion was built and the sanctuary of Cybele was transferred to the old Bouleuterion. Around 140 BC, a new Metroon is built, where the temple of the goddess and repository of Athens' laws are situated together, Borgeaud 2004: 13, 139, ft. 12.

[107] Vermaseren 1977; 34; Borgeaud 2004: 29; Roller 1996: 317.

[108] Vermaseren 1977: 35.

[109] Ibid: 36-37; Graillot 1912: 503-520.

[110] Spring festivities in honour of Cybele are known as *Galaxia*, while the summer festivities were known as *Cronia*, Robertson 1996: 241. The exact period when the spring festivities were held in Athens isn't known, but it is known that on Delos and Thasos, they were held in March/April.

[111] The lexis of the term for spring festivities of Cybele, *Galaxia*, implies the nature of meal offerings to the goddess because it was derived from the word *galakt-ia* (γαλακτ-ια) which translates as ‹milky meal›. Centuries later, during the spring festivities of the goddess in Rome, milk was consummated by her worshippers in her honour, Hepding 1903: 197-198.

[112] Robertson 1996: 265.

[113] Ibid: 270. N. Robertson thinks that Cybele's worshippers sang and danced to the sounds of tympanum and cymbals, not only to please her but also to stimulate the nature in their wish for the rain to fall, Ibid: 292.

[114] Complete Hellenisation of Cybele is confirmed not only with an iconographic presentation like the statue of a girl with a torch from Gordion, which implies nocturnal rites in the honour of the goddess in Greece, but also the epithets of Cybele, who is known in the Hellenistic period as Meter Dindymene, Meter Steuene, Meter Zizimmene etc. These epithets were derived from the name of the place (or mountain) where the goddess was venerated, Roller 1999: 189. Particularly Cyzicus in Phrygia was known as the centre where Cybele was worshipped by many names – as Mater Dindymene, Kotiane, Lobrine and Plakiane, Vermaseren 1977: 28.

[115] Herodotos describes that a splendid festival was celebrated in honour of the Mother of the gods in Cyzicus. Archaeological excavations near the main gate of Pergamon resulted in the series of foundations and the statue of the goddess modelled by the Agorakritos' sculpture. Also, numerous statuettes presenting the goddess with *corona muralis*, found in different sites all around the city, imply her function as the protectress of Pergamon gates and walls, Roller 1999: 156, 207.

[116] The cult statue of the Mother of the Gods in Cyzicus' main sanctuary was made of gold and ivory and was brought to the city from Proconessus, Bowden 2010: 87.

[117] The temple of the Mother of the Gods was built on the site Mamurt Kale, by the first ruler of Pergamon, Philetairos. On the very place where the temple was, numerous finds of goddess's terracottas presenting Cybele holding tympanum and bowl for libation in her hands and reliefs of the goddess inside naiskos, were found, Roller 1999: 209-210.

[118] Attalid kings worshipped Cybele by the name of Great mother (Μήτηρ Μεγάλη) and her temple in Pergamon, situated near the city gates, was known as *Megalesion*, Roller 1999: 270. The correspondence between Attalid kings, Eumenes II and Attalos II and the priests from Pessinus is known from seven letters dating between 163 and 158 BC. All priestly dynasts from Pessinus carried the title of Attis.

who were all called Attis (a personal name or a title).[119] Later on, both sanctuaries, from Ilium and Pessinus, came under the control of Pergamon. Votive inscriptions dedicated to Cybele show that the social status of the goddess's devotees was very diverse – they belonged to a wide social spectrum: from members of the Attalid dynasty to persons from the lowest social levels. Still, certain votive monuments clearly indicate that in Asia Minor cities during Hellenism, Cybele was subordinated to the other deities in the Greek pantheon.[120] A degree of antipathy towards the goddess can be observed in the historical sources from the Hellenistic period in Greece, because of her wild character and the strange nature of the rites performed in her honour. Also, the cult of the Mother of the Gods was never officially recognised in Greece, as it was in Rome. The goddess was respected as the deity of Nature, fertility, and as a chthonian goddess, protectress of women, sailors, etc., but she never received the kind of an official respect in Greece as she did in Rome.

The reasons for the official advent of Cybele's cult in Rome were of a political nature and closely connected to the wars that were fought between Rome and Carthage. They were also linked to the prevailing economic and social situation in Rome.[121] Titus Livius writes that wars, poverty and fear had led to a religious crisis in Rome, which reflected in the abandoning of the religious customs and cult practices and the Senate's decision to consult the Sibylline books, whose prophecy was 'to bring the Idaean Mother from Pessinus to Rome'.[122] In 205 BC, an official delegation was selected to go to Pergamon to bring the sacred stone of the goddess, which was given to them by king Attalus.[123] In 204 BC, a black meteorite, the symbol of the goddess Cybele, came to Rome and was welcomed again by an officially selected delegation. According to the Delphic oracle, the goddess was welcomed by the best man in Rome, *vir optimus,* Publius Scipio Nasica,[124] but also by the most respectful woman (*femina pudica*), whose virtues included purity and piety, most probably matron Claudia Quinta.[125] On 4th April 204 BC, Publius Scipio Nasica and the *matrona castissima* Claudia Quinta in Ostia, accompanied by five war ships and crowds of people, welcomed the goddess,[126] placing her sacred image in the temple of Victory on the Palatine, which symbolically secured the divine favour for the victory in the war with Carthage. Although ordinary Romans welcomed the Phrygian goddess with gifts and prayers,

From the letters, Pessinus' wish to please Pergamon kings is clear, as the intention of Pergamon kings to claim their hegemony over the Cybele's sanctuary, Ibid: 194.

[119] Lancellotti 2002: 49-50; Roller 1994: 245-262; Vermaseren 1977: 26; Graillot 1912: 350-351.

[120] From the 3rd century text from Halikarnassos, it can be seen that certain Poseidonios sacrifices to different deities (Zeus Patroos, Apollo, Telmessos, The Moirai and Cybele), offering a ram to all of them except to the Mother of the Gods, who receives a goat, Roller 1999: 204.

[121] H. Graillot's opinion about Cybele's advent to Rome was that because of quite insecure political situation in Rome, it was necessary to somehow stabilize the political situation and bring back self-confidence to Roman people by introducing divine assistance. He based his opinion relying mainly on the allegations of Titus Livius and Cicero (disregarding in a way other ancient writers) and was followed by certain scholars in the line of mentioned opinion (like T. Kōves, M. J. Vermaseren, F. Bömer etc). However, there were other opinions about the possible reasons for the introduction of the goddess's cult in Rome – E. S. Gruen thinks that Roman victory in 207 BC near the Metauro river (the battle of the Metaurus) over Carthage, brought Romans back their optimism and self-reliance and strengthen their wish to emphasise their Trojan origin by their linking with Cybele, but also to reclaim the reputation of Rome in the East, Gruen 1996: 5-33. But, as P. J. Burton rightly points out, in his analysis and interpretation of the possible reasons for Cybele's coming to Rome, E. S. Gruen neglected events from the interior politics of the Roman state – Romans didn't have many reasons to boast and be self-content, because the wars with Carthage weren't over yet and the social situation in the country wasn't good (there was growing discontent of the peasants because of the destroyed fields and killed stock etc.). Also, a new danger for Rome appeared in the shape of the army of Hamilcar's son Mago, therefore it is more realistic to presume that Rome was worried and tired from the possibility of new wars and losses and in that context wanted to bring some stability with the assistance of new religion and cult, Burton 1996: 36-63.

[122] Tit. Liv. XXV 1. 7-8; 'Whensoever a foreign enemy should bring war into the land of Italy, he may be driven out of Italy and conquered, if the Idaean Mother should be brought from Pessinus to Rome', Ibid: XXIX 10.6

[123] The Roman delegation consisted of the members of old, respected families like Marcus Valerius Laevinus (twice consul), Marcus Caecilius Metellus (praetor), Servius Sulpicius Galba (aedile) Gaius Tremellius Flaccus and Marcus Valerius Falto, Tit. Liv. XIX 11; Graillot 1912: 50; Vermaseren 1977: 39; Bömer 1964:131. Livy states that when the Roman delegation reached Pergamon, Attalus led them to Pessiunus and gave them the goddess's sacred stone. Ovid's accounts about the coming of Cybele to Rome are somewhat exaggerated, because he emphasises the link between the Trojan origin Aeneas, the mythical founder of Rome and Trojan origin of Cybele, even stating that the ship on which the goddess travelled from Pessinus to Rome, was built from the pine-trees from the mount Idea, Ovid *Fasti* IV 249-254, 264.

[124] Titus Livius' account about Publius Scipio Nasica is that he was a young man without political office, but a son of a hero who died in Spain in 212 BC fighting for Rome and nephew of Publius Scipio Nasica, future Africanus. Different opinions exist in contemporary literature in regard to the naming of a young and inexperienced man for such an important occasion such was the welcome of goddess Cybele – E. S. Gruen and T. Koves think that it was well thought political decision (because of the Scipione's influence on the politics and religion). T. Koves even speculated that Publius Scipio was an embodiment of his cousin Africanus or symbolically presented Cybele's companion Attis, Kōves 1963: 322-325. G. Th. Tomas rejects such interpretation with arguments that such equitation of Roman nobleman and Phrygian god would be unacceptable in the Republican period, additionally since Attis even didn't enjoy such popularity in the time of Cybele's arrival to Rome, Thomas 1984: 1506.

[125] Most authors think that matrona who welcomed the goddess and to which hands Publius Scipio placed the sacred stone of Cybele, was Claudia Quinta. However, Diodorus Siculus writes that woman's name was Valeria, Diod. Sic. *Books* 34/35. 33. 2-3. Titus Livius writes that Claudia Quinta was a married woman, while Silius Italicus and Statius say that she was a Vestal, which can be attributed to the wishes of ancient writers to present Claudia as the chastest of all women, Tit. Liv. XXIX 14.12, Silius Italicus XVII 33-47, Statius *Silvae* I.2-245. Even Julian in the 4th century continues with the tradition of calling Claudia Quinta a Vestal, Graillot 1912: 63. Later on, probably in the 1st century, Claudia Quinta's statue was placed in the pronaos of the Metroon in Rome and she was divinized as goddess Navisalvia (The Saviour of the ship), which is attested by three epigraphic monuments, Winsor Leach 2007: 1-13; Vilogorac Brčić 2012: 373-379; Dubosson-Sbriglione 2018: 40-46.

[126] The construction of the Metroon was entrusted to the censors, Marcus Livius Salinator and Gaius Claudius Nero in 204 BC and dedicated after 13 years of building, in 191 BC, Turcan 1996: 37.

it is probable that they did not know much about her myth, theology and the ritual practices of her cult. Cybele was introduced to Romans as an ancestral Roman deity, because of her close relationship with Troy and, thus, Rome's origins and Trojan heritage.[127] The sacred stone of the goddess remained in the Temple of Victory on the Palatine until 10th April 191 BC, when the sanctuary of the goddess was built on the south-western corner of the Palatine. The temple of Cybele burnt twice – in 111 BC and 3 BC, but it was restored each time.[128] Upon her arrival in Rome, the Phrygian Mother Goddess was given an official name – *Mater Deum Magna Idaea* (after Mount Ida near Troy), under which she is venerated on votive monuments from Rome and Roman provinces. The most frequent epithets of the goddess, both in literature and epigraphic monuments, are Augusta, Alma, Sancta and Sanctissima.[129] The iconography of Magna Mater in Roman times stayed faithful to Hellenistic canon - the goddess is presented frontally, seated on a throne flanked by two lions, holding different attributes in her hands.[130] The only attribute that was not often presented in Hellenistic images of the goddess, but became almost obligatory in Roman presentations, is a crown in the shape of the city walls, known as a mural crown or *corona muralis*.[131] This detail implies that Romans looked upon iconographic models originating from Asia Minor, particularly Pergamon, which is also attested by the similarities between votive figurines from Pergamon and terracottas found in the area of the Metroon on the Palatine, during archaeological excavations after World War II.[132] Celebrations held in Magna Mater's honour and the commemoration of her arrival in Rome were known as *Megalensia* and lasted from 4th to 10th April every year, performed in front of the Metroon.[133] During the Republican period, the festivities were linked primarily to the Imperial house and the Roman aristocracy. The city praetor was in charge of the organisation of the celebrations, later on *aediles* from noble families like Cornellia, Claudia, Valeria, Aemilia, Licinia and Fulvia were charged with arranging the festivities.[134] Strangers and slaves were forbidden from participating in Megalensia,[135] during which the goddess's priests and priestesses carried Magna Mater's statue in holy procession, from her temple to the river Almo, where the statue was ritually bathed. The sacrifice of a heifer would follow[136] and a banquet (*mutationes*), after which games in a circus and theatrical plays (*ludi scaenici*) were performed.[137] Magna Mater's *aedes* was open for her adherents only on 4th and 10th April, when they would bring offerings to the goddess (so-called *moretum*, meals made of white cheese, garlic, celery, rue and coriander, mixed with oil and vinegar).[138] Although at the beginning, Magna Mater's festivities were related to the Roman aristocracy, ordinary Romans were also impressed by the lavish public display of the celebrations and were aware of the important role of the goddess's cult in the Roman state ideology.[139] However, from the very introduction of

[127] Gruen 1996: 19.

[128] After the fire in 111 BC, the Metroon was restored by Quintus Caecilius Metellus Numidicus, while after the fire in 3 BC, it was rebuilt by Augustus. However, P. Zanker thinks that Augustus didn't rebuild the whole temple, only some parts of it, Zanker 1990: 109. R. Bell opposes that and argues that Augustus restored not only *cella* and interior columns of the Metroon, but also its roof and the architectural decoration, Bell 2007: 25.

[129] For Augusta see *CIL* 8, 1776, 16440, 23400 and 2340, *AE* 1911, 22, AE 1913, 24, *AE* 1955, 142, *AE* 1957, 92a, *CIL* 8, 2230; for sancta *AE* 2005, 1126, *CIL* VIII, 8203; for sanctissima *CIL* V, 3438, *CIL* VI, 113.

[130] The earliest presentations of Magna Mater in Rome are represented by fragmented terracottas found during the archaeological excavations on the Palatine after World War II, dated between 191 and 111 BC and very similar to the terracottas from Troy dated to the 3rd and 2nd century BC. The attribute of the tympanum is not present on the earliest presentations of the goddess, Naumann 373: num.656-657; Thompson, Thompson 1987: 352 etc.

[131] The attribute of *corona muralis* appears on Cybele's presentations and the earliest objects are two terracottas from Pergamon, Roller 1999: 145, f. 6.

[132] Ibid: 278.

[133] *Megalensia* (a term probably derived from goddess's epithet Μεγάλη) were held yearly, from the 4th April, the day of ceremonial arrival of the goddess to Rome to the 10th April, when her temple on Palatine was consecrated. Goddess's festival was also known by the names Megalenses, Ludi Megeleses, Ludi Megalesiaci, Graillot 1912: 81.

[134] Members of the families Cornelia, Claudia and Valeria were among the welcoming board for Magna Mater.

[135] During the Megalensia in 56 BC, a riot organized by *aedile* Publius Clodius Pulcher happened, with his gathering slaves from all the parts of Rome, arming them and breaking into the theatre during the festivities. Cicero described the event in detail, emphasising that 'this mighty Mother, whose games were thus violated and polluted and turned almost to a massacre and to the destruction of the city, does roam over the fields and through the groves with a certain degree of noise and roaring', Cicero *De Harispicum responso,* 24. He also turns to the previous incident caused by Publius Clodius in connection to Magna Mater's cult in Pessinus from 58 BC, when Clodius's man Brogitarus, insulted the dignity of goddess's priest and her temple, Ibid: 28.

[136] Turcan 1996: 37-38; Vermaseren 1977: 124-125. H. Graillot mentions the possibility of the third kind of sacrifice to the goddess, of first harvest products, which would confirm her dimension of the goddess of vegetation and agriculture, Graillot 1912: 80. The heifer sacrifice and banquets were held only on the 4th and the 10th of April.

[137] Titus Livius states that theatrical performances became the part of Megalensia in 194 or 191 BC and were held before the temple of the goddess, as chariot races were added at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century, Tit. Liv. XXXIV 54.2-3; Roller 1999: 289. Ovid isn't consistent in his description of the ceremonial procession in the honour of Magna Mater – first he states that the goddess's statue was carried, Ovid *Fasti* IV 185-186, while afterwards he writes about goddess's entering the city on a wagon pulled by oxen on which the crowds threw flowers, Ibid: 345-346. However, his first account is probably the veritable one, since it is supported by the representations from monuments, like a fresco from Pompeii and sarcophagus of unknown provenience dated to the late 2nd or early 3rd century, on which the deity is shown on a carriage held by four of her priests, Summers 1996: 342-343; *CCCA* IV: num. 42; *CCCA* VII: num. 39.

[138] Ovid, *Fasti,* IV. 367-372; Vermaseren 1977: 125.

[139] Only five deities during the Republican period had their own official festivals with games: Jupiter, Apollo, Hercules, Liber and Ceres, and since the acceptance of Phrygian goddess cult – Magna Mater as well, Roller 1999: 289. The figure of the goddess starts to appear in the republican coins – the earliest one being coined in 102 BC (A/ bust of Magna Mater with *corona muralis*, R/ goddess Victoria), Turcan 1983: 6. The bust of the goddess was usually shown on the avers, with curule chairs (coins of Publius Furius Crassipes and Marcus Plaetorius

Fresco of Magna Mater procession, Pompeii
(https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Mothers-of-the-Gods%3A-A-Case-for-Syncretism-in-the-Caudill/5c422ca0315f6ddc53aa890a9e0c17297e2583c4/figure/4)

Magna Mater's festival, two visual aspects of the goddess's cult seemed odd and unacceptable for Romans – the goddess's priests known as *galli*, with the main priest *archigallus,* and the rituals performed during Megalensia.[140] The term *gallus*, used by ancient writers for eunuch priests of the goddesses Magna Mater and Dea Syria, is probably derived from the term *Galatians*, a Celtic tribe that inhabited central Anatolia in the early 3rd century BC.[141] Magna Mater's clergy - *archigallus* and *galli* were known in Asia Minor during the Hellenistic period, but were not solely associated with Cybele – only during the Imperial period, probably from the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century, did they become closely connected to the goddess and her cult.[142] Upon her arrival in Rome, the goddess was escorted by a Phrygian priest and a Phrygian priestess, who were variously named during the Imperial period.[143] The existence of both sexes in Magna Mater's clergy in the Imperial period,[144] together with the exotic and overly emotional, almost frantic practising of the rituals in honour of the goddess, mostly contributed to the negative attitudes of ancient writers (particularly those of a Christian faith) towards the Phrygian goddess. Several recorded events connected to *galli* which anteceded the negative opinions aroused in historical sources, confirm that generally Romans were benevolent to the Magna

Cestianus) or camel (coins of Aurelius Platius), Ibid: 9-13. On the coins of Marcus Volteius, Lucius Cestius and Gaius Norbanus, the goddess drives biga of lions on the revers, Ibid: 13-15.

[140] The priests of Magna Mater known as *galli* were the same priests of the goddess who bore the name/title Attis in Phrygia. As I already mentioned, L. E. Roller suggested that based on the dedications to the goddess by persons by the name of Attis, it could be presumed that it became the title of the main priest of the deity, Roller 1999: 254. After the arrival of Magna Mater to Rome, *galli* appeared only during Megalensia in the public, but archaeological finds and literary sources imply that their number was growing parallelly with the popularity of god Attis, in the 1st century BC. Due to Claudius' reforms and March festivities dedicated to god Attis, *galli* became more prominent and therefore more visible to the Romans, unfortunately only receiving their condemnation. The institution of *archigallus* appeared during Claudius or Antoninus Pius reign. As *summus sacerdos* of Magna Mater, archigallus could be only Roman citizen and never eunuch (since the Roman law forbade the castration to Roman citizens). In most cases, archigallus had to go through the ritual of taurobolium. He could get married and could sacrifice on the behalf of the Roman emperor and Roman Empire, Lancellotti 2002, 105. M. J. Vermaseren writes that archigallus was considered to be a seer, gave oracles and was appointed for life, Vermaseren 1977: 108. Archigallus was selected from *quindecemviri sacris faciundis* and wore symbols like a crown or laurel wreath and a golden bracelet (*occabus*), Turcan 1996: 49-51.

[141] Roller 1999: 229. Numerous authors, ancient and contemporary, discussed the origin and meaning of the word *gallos, gallus.* Ovid, Plinius, Herodian, Martianus Capella and Julian thought that the word was derived from the name of the river Gallus in Asia Minor. Byzantine writer Stephanus of Byzantium also attaches the meaning of the word *gallos* to the name of the river, for the whole review of the opinions of ancient writers see Lane 1996: 117-133; M. J. Vermaseren writes that the word *gallus* is derived from the Latin word for rooster (symbol of galli) – gallus, Vermaseren 1977: 96. E. N. Lane is of opinion that the word *gallus* should be linked to the Galatians, Lane 1996: 130-133;

[142] The function of *archigallus* is mentioned on 19 dedications (12 dedications discovered in western provinces like Italy, Galliae, Spain, Dalmatia etc., while 7 dedications are known from the eastern provinces like Phrygia, Galatia, Pisidia, Isauria etc.), Dubosson-Sbriglione 2018: 178.

[143] Graillot 1912: 59. G. Th. Thomas thinks that the priesthood of Magna Mater was named differently in Latin language (*summus sacerdos, pontifex, sacerdos in primo/secundo loco, sacerdos Phryx maximus*), which actually implied the hierarchical structure of the goddess's priesthood, Thomas 1984: 1528-1529. Magna Mater's priestesses were called by different terms – *sacerdos, sacerdos maxima, ministra, honesta femina, clarissima femina* etc. For the inscriptions with the names of Magna Mater priestesses see Graillot 1912: 248-249. The function of *sacerdos Phryx maximus* is known from only one inscription found in Rome and it is presumed that Flavius Antonius Eustochius who is mentioned under that function was equivalent by his rights and obligations to *sacerdos maximus*, Dubosson-Sbriglione 2018: 153.

[144] Confirmed with the votive monument from Benevento, dated around 228 AD, whose dedicants are Magna Mater's priest Lucius Sontius Pineius Iustianus and priestess Cosinia Celsina, *CCCA* IV, 40, num. 100.

Mater's cult, but not towards her priesthood.[145] Much has been written about the unusual effeminate appearance of the *archigallus* and *galli*, yet little is known abut their cultic duties and characteristics. They were eunuchs and, although ancient writers mention their 'castration' or 'self-castration', it is unlikely that full castration was performed during their initiation, because they would have died from the blood loss or in the best case scenario, they would have suffered constant urinary infections.[146] Lucretius and Ovid, who describe *galli* as feminised men, dressed in long dresses of strong colours, with make-up on their faces and long hair, adorned with jewellery and frenetically dancing and falling into a trance, while flogging and cutting their bodies, mention that they would sometimes self-castrate.[147] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Varro and Virgil write similarly about the Phrygian priests of Magna Mater, affirming that they were effeminate men dressed in yellow and multi-coloured dresses with long sleeves, while Juvenal adds that *galli* wore a peculiar, turban alike headdress (called *mitra*) or a tiara on their heads. Prudentius states that *galli* wore a cap with long ear-flaps, which they could tie under their chins.[148] They also wore different cultic ornaments on their chests and wore jewellery like women.[149] What the *galli* and *archigallus* looked like is easy to observe from several monuments presenting them, like the Luna marble relief of Lanuvium 'gallus',[150] the marble cinerary altar of Lucius Valerius Fyrmus,[151] the marble statue of a standing 'gallus' from Rome,[152] the marble bust of a gallus and the sarcophagus lid of Portus Archigallus.[153] Beside the quite unpriestly appearance of Magna Mater's clergy, concerning the general Roman opinion about *galli,* the fact that they begged from door to door in the name of the goddess during the Megalensia did not help at all.[154] The Roman state kept a firm hand over Magna Mater's cult, with the decision that Roman citizens could not serve or take part in its ritual practices but, on the other hand, officials tried to adapt the cult to be more similar to Roman cults.[155] Certain ceremonies of Magna Mater's cult overlapped with Roman ceremonies, like the public procession with the display of carrying and washing the goddess's sacred statue. Herodian states that the most precious objects from the emperor's palace were carried through Rome during festivities in honour of Magna Mater, which symbolised the unity between the imperial house and

[145] Titus Livius describes that first contact of the Roman army with two *galli* of Mother Goddess happened in Pessinus in 189 BC, Tit. Liv. XXVIII 18.9-10. The second mention of *gallus* was recorded in 102 BC, when a slave of certain Quintus Servilius Caepia dedicated himself to the goddess by self-castration, which provoked the anger of Roman people who banished castrated slave, Graillot 1912: 98. Around the same time, goddess's priest Batacces came to Rome on a diplomatic visit and was received by the Roman Senate with all honours, Thomas 1984: 1511; Vermaseren 1977: 99. Valerius Maximus writes that in 77 BC, certain Genucius, *gallus* of Magna Mater inherited significant possessions from a freedman, but he was denied of the inheritance by the authorities because he willingly castrated himself and could not be counted nor as man nor as a woman, Val. Max., *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium,* 7.7.6.

[146] Beard 2012: 341; J. Alvar suggests that *galli* performed self-castigation and self-laceration, thus lacking testicles and scrotum, but didn't subject themselves to the full castration which would comprehend the removal of their testicles and penis, Alvar 2008: 247-250.

[147] *Galli* were eunuchs during the Roman period, but that wasn't so in the earliest period of their existence. In Asia Minor, priests of Mother Goddess were respected persons, who were social elite and to whose names, the word 'eunuch' wasn't attached to. In Greece, the institution of *gallus* was hereditary, from father to son. However, in the earliest mention of *galli*, in the sixth epigram of Anthologia Palatina, the priests of Mother goddess are described as feminized with long loose hair, dressed in women's clothes, perfumed and who performed their rituals waving their hair ecstatically and banging on various instruments, Roller 1999: 228-230. Lucretius vivid descriptions of *galli* caused many discussions among scholars and I won't go into that, but it is important to mention that Ovid takes over a larger part of Lucretius' descriptions of Magna Mater priests, but in a different way – while Lucretius writes that *galli* frightened the Romans who then out of fear threw gifts and flowers on them, Ovid states that Romans showered *galli* with flowers and money because of the happiness caused by the goddess's arrival to Rome. J. Jope rejects the opinion of P. Boyancé about Lucretius' use of Stoic sources for describing *galli* and thinks that Lucretius gave a fine picture of the orgiastic nature of Magna Mater's rituals, Jope 1985: 261; R. Turcan inclines to the opinion of P. Boyancé and also thinks that Lucretius was inspired by stoic ideas when he portrayed Magna Mater's priests *galli*, Turcan 1996: 40.

[148] Vermaseren 1977: 97.

[149] Magna Mater's priests wore different kinds of ornaments – ornamented reliefs, pendants, earrings, bracelets, finger rings and sometimes bleached their hair, Ibid.

[150] *CCCA* III, num. 466. Known as Luna relief, dated to 150 AD and found near Lanuvium, the presentation of *gallus* shows Magna Mater's adherent with veiled hair, decorated crown with three disks with reliefs and hair bound with two long strings of beads. His ears are pierced, he wears a torque and bracelet around his hand. Different ritual utensils are presented around his image – *cista mistica*, two flutes, tympanum and cymbals, Latham 2016: 68; A. Klöckner names eight monuments (seven from Rome and one from Caesarea, Mauretania Caesariensis), that visually represent the devotees of Magna Mater. After referring to the close iconographical similarities with the image of Laberia Felicla, the author also notices that the *gallus* in Luna relief was presented with huge eyes, what perhaps implied his prophetic power, Klöckner 2017: 357.

[151] *CCCA* III, num. 422. Marble cinerary altar of Lucius Valerius Fyrmus, also dated to the 2nd century, presents a priest of Isis and Magna Mater, in quite a sober manner, without jewellery and additional ornaments except for a *flagellum* in his hand. Because of his clothing, the priest reminds of god Attis, which in J. Latham opinion implies that certain priests of the goddess imitated her paredros, Latham 2016: 69.

[152] *CCCA* III, num. 249. The beautiful statue of *gallus* named Attis, dated to the 3rd century from Rome, represents fragile young man in feminine clothing with torque and necklace and two circular medallions with a metal plaque, with presentations of Attis, Zeus, Hermes and Cybele, Latham 2016: 69. , Klöckner 2017: 353-354.

[153] *CCCA* III, num. 446. The lid of a sarcophagus found in Ostia presenting a reclining figure of an archigallus with a Phrygian cap and holding a pine branch in his right hand. He is wearing a bracelet (*occabus*) with Magna Mater's image in the centre and the rest of his clothing implies the imitation of the clothes of god Attis. J. Latham suggests that the statuary composition could present a dying Attis, Latham 2016: 70.

[154] As M. Beard points out the act of begging of galli was completely opposed to Roman priests who were seen as civic benefactors who offered a public sacrifice as a generosity act toward the Roman people, Beard 2012: 344-345.

[155] As Dionysius of Halicarnassus writes only a 'Phrygian man and a Phrygian woman act as priests' for Magna Mater and 'no native Roman may go about through the city decked out in a brightly coloured robe and playing the flute while begging alms or celebrate the goddess's orgies in the Phrygian manner', Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* II. 19.

Marble relief of a gallus from Lanuvium
(https://brentnongbri.com/2018/07/05/a-marble-relief-of-a-priest-of-cybele/)

the goddess.[156] However, contempt of Romans for the *galli* continued and this is clear from the names they were called by ancient writers – half men (*semiviri*, *semimares*), half women (*ἡμίθηλυς*), little doves, male prostitutes (*cinaedi*), etc.[157] The bloody aspect of Magna Mater's cult in the form of the *galli*'s castration is described on some of the Mainz curse tablets from the mutual sanctuary of Magna Mater and Isis, dated to the period of Vespasian's reign, which attest the spilling of blood and self-mutilation of the galli.[158] How the *galli* were treated is perhaps best shown by Catullus in his Carmen 63, where the main character is a priest of Magna Mater, who is completely alienated from everybody else and has no place in Roman society.[159] Roman disdain and rejection of the *galli* because of their unusual and feminised appearance, certainly led some of them to avoid presenting their physical appearance, as the *archigallus* Marcus Modius Maximus did.[160] During the reign of Augustus, the cult of Magna Mater continued to strengthen – the emperor not only

[156] Beard 2012: 349.

[157] Ovid calls galli *semimares,* Ovid *Fasti* IV, 183; Vermaseren 1977: 96; Roller 1998: 126. Terms like semivires, semimares and ἡμίθηλυς clearly imply the Roman odium towards *galli*. The word *cinaedus* (male prostitute), which Apuleius uses for naming Magna Mater's *gallus* in his work The Golden Ass, is particularly offensive, Apuleius 8. 24. In *Anthologia Palatina* epigram, a *gallus* Trygonion is described as a 'little dove' with a lady-like tender limbs and idol of nerveless emasculates, Latham 2016: 53.

[158] Beard 2012: 347-348. The Mainz curse tablets are addressed to Magna Mater, but also to god Attis (who is highly valued as *deus maximus, tyrannus, dominus*) for the avenge of dedicants. In some of the tablets, like in B4 (inv. num. 182) and B6, 2 (inv. num. 31), the self-mutilation and castration of *galli* is mentioned, Gordon 2012: 200-202.

[159] Catullus' Carmen 63 describes a *gallus* Attis who is completely alienated – he is not a man, nor a woman and as a person of vague social status, he doesn't belong anywhere. In his poem, Catullus touches many sociological questions (the status of women in Roman society, the status of men without their masculinity etc.) and accurately portrays the Roman treatment of *galli.* J. P. Elder presumes that based on the Catullus description of *galli*, the poet witnessed cult practices in the honour of Magna Mater in Bithynia and Rome, Elder 1947: 394-403.

[160] The marble *cista* of *archigallus coloniae Ostiensis*, Marcus Modius Maximus represents different motives like a bearded head of Jupiter or the river-god Gallus, a seated lion, Attis, a syrinx, a cymbalum, a tympanum and on the top of the *cista*, a large rooster (*gallus* in Latin), *CCCA* III: 123-124, num. 395.

Statue and drawing of a standing gallus
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Montfaucon,_Bernard_de._L%E2%80%99Antiquite_Expliqu%C3%A9e_et_Repr%C3%A9sent%C3%A9e_en_Figures_-_Archigalle_(1719).jpg)

restored the goddess's temple on Palatine, but he also built his residence in the vicinity of Magna Mater's sanctuary.[161] Augustus' wish to return to *mos maiorum* included the cult of the Phrygian deity, which is attested by the archaeological monuments, like the pediment of the Palatine Metroon,[162] the marble base of the sculptural group from Sorento[163] and the votive altar *vicus Sandaliarius*.[164] Presentations of Augustus' wife

[161] R. R. Nauta thinks that Augustus built his residence on Palatine not because of the closeness to the temple of Magna Mater, but because of the vicinity of Victoria's temple. The author agrees that the Roman emperor consciously included the cult of the Phrygian goddess in his own propaganda, due to the links with Troy and mythical founder of Rome, Aeneas, Nauta 2007: 84-85.

[162] The appearance of Magna Mater's temple on Palatine is known thanks to the fragmented reliefs from Villa Medici, known as Valle-Medici reliefs. R. Bell emphasises that the representation of the throne and *corona muralis* symbolically implied the connection between Augustus and Magna Mater, Bell 2007: 74 etc.

[163] Fragmented marble base from Sorrento should have been the base for three statues, one presenting Augustus. On all four sides of the base, Roman deities are presented, one of them being Magna Mater on the throne with *corona muralis* and veil on her head and lion beside her right side (side D of Sorrento base). Behind the goddess, a dancing Corybant with a crested helmet and shield is presented. The Sorrento base celebrates Augustus' vision of Rome and sums up his most personal religious feelings, Ibid: 217-241.

[164] The votive altar of *vicus Sandalarius* is erected in 2 BC and dedicated to Lares Augusti by four *liberti* who were *vicomagistri*, officials of a

Livia as the Magna Mater or the goddess's priestess wearing a *corona muralis*, veil and tympanum, only underline the Augustan ideology that promoted the further favouring of the goddess's cult.

During the reign of Tiberius, the popularity of Oriental cults grew, while Caligula celebrated the birthday of his sister Julia Drusilla in a similar fashion to the Megalensia.[165] Claudius expressed interest in Magna Mater's cult, not only because she was the protectress of the gens Julia, but also because of her association with Aeneas, the mythical ancestor of gens Julia.[166] In his wish to make the goddess's cult more familiar to Romans, Claudius reformed the goddess's clergy[167] and allowed Roman citizens to become priests or priestesses of Magna Mater.[168] Claudius was the first Roman emperor that did not ignore the cult of Magna Mater's consort, the god Attis, but joined it to the goddess's cult and commemorated it with festivities celebrated in the official Roman calendar, from 15th to 27th March.[169] The introduction of the main priest of Magna Mater, *archigallus,* into the goddess's cult is also attributed to Claudius by some scholars, although there are other opinions regarding the introduction of the *archigallus* institution in the period of Antoninus Pius.[170] Vespasian returned to the honouring of the traditional cults, but did not neglect the cult of Magna Mater – he restored her temple in Herculaneum in 63 and built a temple to the goddess and her paredros in Leptis Magna.[171] As Caligula, Domitian was mostly oriented to the cult of the goddess Isis, but during his reign one more Metroon was built in Rome, in the Via Sacra.[172] With Trajan's succession to the throne, Magna Mater's cult acquired new followers and spread to parts of Roman Empire where it had not been previously known. The emperor probably put the statue of the goddess on the *spina* of Circus Maximus, since Dio Cassius writes that Trajan enlarged and decorated the Circus and the statue of the goddess appeared on his coins.[173] Hadrian's reign, known for his return to the classicising content of Augustus' period, paid the same respect to Magna Mater's cult, with the goddess's image on coins, but without any regard to the cult of Attis or the exotic rituals performed in honour of the Phrygian god.[174] Hadrian's reign is also known for the legislation against castration, which was in the form of a rescript, with the emperor's clear intent to 'find guilty everyone who should make eunuchs.'[175] The building of the Metroon in Ostia was also related to the period of Hadrian's rule.[176] Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, displayed his admiration and respect not only for the cult of Magna Mater, but also for the cult of the god Attis, which can be seen in the official recognition of the ritus *taurobolium*, which became part of the goddess's cult.[177] During Antoninus Pius' reign, the first coins with representations of Magna Mater and Attis together appeared.[178] As for the ritual

vicus Sandalarius (a street in Rome, Region IV, deriving its name from the shops of the cobblers - *sandaliarii*). The main scene of the altar presents two men and a woman. Older man holds a curved augural staff - lituus, while on his right side stands a woman with a diadem and veil on her head and patera in her hand. Most scholars presume that these two figures present Augustus as pontifex maximus and the priestess of Magna Mater, while the younger man is probably Augustus grandson, Gaius Caesar. The scene represents divination (*tripudium*) and glorifies the emperor as *pater patrie*, but also implies the link of the emperor's family with the cult of Magna Mater, Ibid: 200-216.

165 Caligula established the cult of Diva Drusilla, along with her sanctuary with the clergy of 20 priests and priestesses and announced that she is to be respected as the goddess. Her birthday was celebrated after the model of Megalensia – it lasted two days, which were filled with chariot races, athletic competitions, banquets etc., Wood 1995: 460.

166 La Piana 1927: 295.

167 M. G. Lancellotti assumes that official enlargement of the Magna Mater's clergy to 10 members happened while Claudius was the emperor, Lancellotti 2002: 104.

168 The main reason why Roman citizens couldn't become the priests of Magna Mater was the obligatory castration, which is the offering of priest's genitalia to the goddess. The castration was strictly forbidden by Roman law. Claudius' permission that Romans can participate in Magna Mater's cults as her priests, parallelly happened with the introduction of the ritual of taurobolium, which comprehended castration of the bull as a substitute for the castration of the goddess's priests, thus Romans could become the goddess's priests without the obligatory castration. Roman priest of Magna Mater was also known as *sacerdos Phrygius maximus, CIL* VI, 502, 2557 or was named Attis (*Attis populi Romani, CIL* VI, 2188).

169 In that way, god Attis, paredros of goddess Magna Mater was officially accepted by the Roman state, for more details see the chapter about the cult of god Attis in Graeco-Roman culture.

170 J. Carcopino based his opinion about the introduction of *archigallus* into Magna Mater's cult in the period of Claudius' reign on the decree from *Fragmenta Vaticana,* Carcopino 1942: 109-134. However, P. Lambrechts and R. Turcan reject J. Carcopino's hypothesis and date the introduction of the institution of *archigallus* in the period of Antoninus Pius, linking it with the reforms in Magna Mater's cult, Lambrechts, Bogaert 1969: 404-414. R. Turcan emphasises that there are no epigraphic testimonies about *archigallus* before the Antonine era, Turcan 1996: 49.

171 Vermaseren 1977: 66, 129.

172 It was a smaller, round temple known from the relief of the Haterii family and coins of the empress Faustina, whose husband Antoninus Pius, restored it in 142, Ibid: 45.

173 Dio Cass. *Roman History* LXVIII 7.1-3.

174 F. Bōmer ascribes the monetary rehabilitation of Magna Mater's presentations on Hadrian's coinage to the emperor's return to the Augustus' values, Bömer 1964, 145. Medallions with Hadrian's bust on avers and Magna Mater on the throne with *corona muralis* on the revers, appear in the emperor's time, as also a representation of Magna Mater with *corona muralis,* sceptre and tympanum on the revers and the bust of Sabina on the avers, Turcan 1983: 25.

175 As R. Abusch rightly points out, Hadrian wasn't the only Roman emperor to ban circumcision, as some scholars think, but he prohibited the castration of the genitals. No Roman ruler ever forbade circumcision which was passed in Jewish families from father to son, but his legislation was primarily pointed towards the castration of men and their turning into eunuchs, for more details see Abusch 2003: 71-91.

176 Borgeaud 2004: 97; R. Meiggs links the building of the Metroon in Ostia for the period of Hadrian's reign, while G. Calza is of the opinion that the temple was constructed in the time of Antoninus Pius, Sfameni Gasparro 1985: 58, ft. 135.

177 The earliest taurobolium was probably performed in 160 and the connection between the ritual and the cult of Magna Marta is evident from a decree of Antoninus Pius to the citizens of Portus, Lamberchts 141-170. The first taurobolium was performed on the behalf of the emperor and the decree was made by Antoninus Pius in the year of his *vicennalia* (twentieth year of his reign), Rutter 1968: 234.

178 On the imperial medallions issued in honour of Antoninus Pius' spouse Faustina (or perhaps after her death in 141), on the avers the empress's bust is represented, while on the reverse the figure

of taurobolium, the sacrifice of the bull,[179] the earliest *taurobolium* is attested on a votive altar from Lyon (Lugdunum), dating to 160.[180] In the same time, another ritual sacrifice appeared – the ritus of *criobolium*, which involved the sacrifice of a ram in honour of the goddess Magna Mater.[181] The criobolium was actually a cheaper alternative to the quite expensive taurobolium, which comprised paying the priest who initiated the candidate, wood for the bonfire and a bull of six years old of exquisite quality, stone, a stonemason and permission to erect the altar.[182] Beside being a cheaper alternative, the criobolium was presumably convenient because of other reasons as well.[183] The taurobolium (*ταυροβόλιον, ταυρόβολον*, from the words *ταυρος* – bull and *βάλλειν* – catching, hunting), known in Latin also as *tauribolium*, *tauropolium* and *tauripolium*, was a ritual of sacrificing a bull[184] and presented a substitute in the initiation ritual for castration or self-castration, since both practices were forbidden by Roman law. In short, the *taurobolium* was a substitutive sacrifice[185] – instead of the initiate being castrated and, thus, initiated into the goddess's cult, a sacrificial animal, a bull or a ram, was castrated instead. J. Alvar, however, does not agree with this quite cemented opinion in the scholarly literature and suggests that the primary function of the taurobolium was commemorative,[186] analogous to the annual cutting of the pine tree during the March festivities in honour of the god Attis, and the transfer of pine tree to the Metroon, where it was mourned by the goddess's priests and devotees.[187]

The candidates who were to be introduced into the goddess's cult went through the ritual of *taurobolium* or *criobolium* and, thus, were initiated, without the obligatory element of castration. Unlike the earliest monuments with mention of the taurobolium, which almost always carry the name of Magna Mater, the name of the god Attis appears sporadically, but from 228, the god's name is mentioned together with the name of the goddess. The ritual of *taurobolium* differed during its existence, but always consisted of the ritual sacrifice of a bull and the initiation of the Magna Mater devotees to her cult by receiving a vessel of the bull's blood (and/or genitals) in the 2nd and 3rd century, and baptising the dedicant with the bull's blood in the 4th century. *Taurobolium* and *criobolium* were performed by *galli* or *archigallus*, because in the Metroac cult, the

of Magna Mater with *corona muralis* and usual attributes of sceptre and tympanum, is shown. On other medallions, the presentation on the avers stays the same, while on the reverse Magna Mater is shown seating on the throne flanked with two lions and with Attis standing on her right side, with pedum and syrinx in his hands, Turcan 1983: 27-29. Unlike the presenting together of Magna Mater and Attis on medallions, two deities aren't presented together in ordinary coinage, Turcan 1996: 48. In the opinion of R. Turcan, the inscription of *Aeternitas* on the sestertii which marked the apotheosis of Faustina, perhaps implies the protection which Faustina enjoyed from Magna Mater, Ibid: 31.

[179] The accurate translation of the other term of the word taurobolium – *bolium* (in Greek βόλιον – catching, throwing of the nest, kill) and inconsistency of the original meaning of this word with the meaning which it gets put together with the word *taurus* (bull) in the context of the word *taurobolium* translated as *sacrificing* and not *killing* of the bull, aroused much polemic in scholarly literature. As the argument that the Greek word βόλιον meant killing, R. Duthoy reminds of the word ελαφηβόλος, from Homer's 'Illiad', which's translation means *killing,* Duthoy 1969: 124. The author also thinks that it is possible that the Greek word βόλιον was translated as killing, but also could be comprehended as *sacrificing* of the killed animal, so that because of various possibilities of its translation, it indicated both – the killing and the sacrificing of the animal, Ibid: 125.

[180] *CIL* XIII, 1751; Duthoy 1969: 50, num. 126; the votive altar from Lugdunum was found in the remains of the theatre in today's Lyon. The inscription states that the taurobolium was performed 'at the command of Magna Mater', for the health of the emperor Antoninus Pius. Above the inscription, there is bucranion, while the head of the ram is presented on the left side of the monument, *CCCA* V, 133-134, num. 386. This first taurobolium actually comprehended the sacrifice of a bull and the dedication of certain parts of a sacrificed animal (J. B. Rutter writes that vires and bucranium of the bull were probably consecrated underneath the altar). It is presumed that the taurobolium in Lugdunum happened in 159, while the altar memorating it was erected in 160, Rutter 1968: 23-224.

[181] The ritual of criobolium, κριοβόλιον, κριόβολον (from Greek words κριός – the ram and βάλλειν – catching, hunting), was differently called in Latin (criobolium, creobolium, crinobolium, criopolium), but meant the same thing – catching / hunting of the ram and sacrificing it. R. Duthoy thinks that the criobolium was always performed in the honour of Magna Mater, unlike F. Cumont who writes that it was dedicated to god Attis. However, R. Duthoy argues that on the Rome inscription on which the name of Attis is mentioned (*CIL* VI, 511), there is no mention of criobolium, unlike the inscription from Ostia (*CIL* XIV, 41, 4302) where it is clear that criobolium is dedicated to Magna Mater, Duthoy 1969: 60-62.

[182] Borgeaud 2004: 164, ft.8; Alvar 2008: 267.

[183] Alvar 2008: 273.

[184] Duthoy 1969: 57-59; Vermaseren 1977: 101. The word taurobolium appears for the first time in Greek inscriptions in the 1st century BC, Duthoy 1969: 1. The origin and meaning of the word have been the subject of interest of numerous authors, from which F. Cumont was the first to connect the term taurobolium with the epithet *tauropolos* of goddess Artemis (*Artemis Tauropolos*), who he equated with the Persian goddess Anahita, whose cult also encompassed the bull's sacrifice, Cumont 1888: 132-136. Although some scholars, like G. Wissowa, accepted the offered interpretation, other authors like H. Graillot, H. Hepding, C. H. Moore, J. B. Rutter and R. Duthoy don't agree with Cumont's views. C. H. Moore discusses the cult of the goddess Anahita and arguments that the earliest *interpretatio graeca* of the goddess wasn't Artemis Tauropolos, but Artemis Perseia, like that in Anahita's cult, bulls weren't sacrificed, but cows, Moore 1906: 44-46. J. B. Rutter and R. Duthoy agree that in the earliest phase of the taurobolium's development, in Asia Minor, the ritus was actually the ritual of the bull's hunting and ultimately, its killing, Rutter 1968: 226-249; Duthoy 1969: 122-125. Only later, in the 2nd century AD, under the term taurobolium, the sacrifice of the animal in honour of goddess Magna Mater, is alluded, McLynn 1996: 312.

[185] Rutter 1968: 237; Lancellotti 2002: 112.

[186] J. Alvar states that two facts are opposed to the hypothesis that taurobolium was a substitutive sacrifice: the first fact is that it's not possible that a substitutive rite which has a sense only at the individual level becomes a public ceremony performed for the welfare of the empire and the emperor and the second fact would be that *galli* weren't visible to the public as the colleges of the dendrophori and cannophori were, with their quite close relationship to the imperial house, Alvar 2008: 274-275.

[187] Here the author is referring to Arnobius' account that after Attis' death, Cybele gathered his scrotum and washed it before burial, which in J. Alvar's opinion is linked with the treatment of the scrota of the sacrificial animals which is implied in epigraphical monuments. To argument his opinion, the author is citing an altar from Vesunna with an image of a bull shown lying behind Attis' statue-bust, as though it represents a recollection of the mutual loss of their genitals. In J. Alvar's opinion, this scene clearly implies a commemorative function for the taurobolium, where the focus was not on the castration of god Attis, but on the preservation of his corpse, Ibid: 275-276.

archigallus was not only the *summus sacerdos*, but also the spiritual leader of Magna Mater's worshippers, the one who was the agent between the goddess and her followers and the one who took care of the initiation of new adherents, because of his profound knowledge of the cult's theology and mystery rites.[188] One of the most important places where *taurobolia* were performed was the *Phrygianum* in Rome, outside the city walls, which was also the sanctuary of Magna Mater and Attis.[189] Analysis of votive monuments with inscriptions commemorating the performed initiations, have shown that the oldest monuments were dedicated to the emperor's health, with the frequently presented symbol of a bull's head (*bucranium*) or ram's head and the symbol of a hooked sword (*ensis hamatus*), with which the animals were killed.[190] Concerning all the inscriptions linked to the rituals of *taurobolium* and *criobolium*, R. Duthoy categorises them in three phases of development:[191] the first phase is characterised by the fact that *taurobolium* becomes an integral part of Magna Mater's cult, which happened in the period between 160 to 225.[192] The second phase, which lasted from around 228 to 319, included the introduction of a sacrificial vessel known as a *cernus,* which served to collect the animal's blood or for keeping its genitals in.[193] The word *cernus* is known from five inscriptions (four from North Africa and one monument from Rome),[194] the earliest one dated between 169 and 177, defining the vessel carried by a woman during the procession. However, scholars do not agree upon what was placed in the *cernus* – it could have served as a container for the animal's blood, but also for storing its genitals.[195] R. Duthoy considers two parts in the ritual, during the second phase; the first part when the animal was killed and its blood collected in the *cernus* and the second part of the ritual, in which the vessel was given to the primary benefactor of the ritus.[196] It is noticeable that in the second phase, more women took part in the ritual.[197] The third phase began around 305 and lasted until 390. During this phase, in R. Duthoy's opinion, the ritual of taurobolium transferred to the ritual of 'blood baptism', based on the description of the late 4th century Christian writer Prudentius. Prudentius describes the initiation of a pagan priest who descends into a pit (*fossa sanguinis*), with planks above it, on which a bull is sacrificed. The animal's blood drips down through the planks onto the priest.[198] After the animal dies, the priest comes out of the pit covered in blood, which is symbolically perceived as his rebirth into a new religion and his new life when he is initiated into the cult. This described division of the *taurobolium*'s development has received much criticism, primarily because of the fact that one third of the monuments that mention the two sacrificial rituals were not included by R. Duthoy in his analysis, but also because of the author's claim that the bull's blood was kept in the *cernus*, while the bull's genitals (*vires*) were buried.[199]

[188] Graillot 1912: 237-238; Medini 1983: 205.

[189] Phrygianum was built on the Vatican Hill (in the vicinity of St. Peter's Basilica), probably during the reign of Antoninus Pius, perhaps earlier during Claudius' ruling. Most of the altars commemorating a taurobolium or a criobolium, stood in the open air and date from the 4th century. The dedications show that the rituals were happening in spring and in summer, with many dedications dating from April when Megalensia was celebrated), Vermaseren 1977: 45-47.

[190] Vermaseren 1977: 101; Turcan 1996: 50.

[191] The ritual of taurobolium was performed until the end of Antiquity, as the criobolium. Sometimes, they are mentioned together, like in the inscription from Cordoba, Spain, dated to 238, where the taurobolium is performed by Publicius Valerius Fortunatus, *CIL* II, 5521. The inscriptions dating from the 3rd and the 4th century, imply that sometimes the same priest performed perhaps both rituals at the same time, Rutter 1968: 226.

[192] The first phase of taurobolium is, in R. Duthoy's opinion, marked by the inscriptions in which the verb *facere* is mentioned and where the taurobolium was undertaken *pro salute imperatoris.* Also, in the first phase of taurobolium, the bull's genitals (*vires tauri*) were buried in the place where the animal was sacrificed, Duthoy 1969: 92-95, 114. For further about the symbolism of bull's castration in the context of *galli*' castration see Rutter 1968: 235.

[193] The second phase of taurobolium is characterized by the use of the verbs *tradere* and *accipere* in the inscriptions and new element mentioned which is known as *cernus,* the sacrificial bowl where some authors think the blood of the sacrificed bull was gathered, while some scholars think that it served for the keeping of the bull's genitals, Duthoy 1969:95-101; Rutter 1968: 238.

[194] Three inscriptions were found in Mactar (Maktar), dated from 276 to 293, *CIL* VIII, 23400, 23401; *AE* 1955, 49; Duthoy 1969: 31-31, num. 60-62. One inscription was found in Utica, dated between 235-238, *AE* 1961, num. 201; Duthoy 1969: 34, num. 68; One inscription was found in Rome, dated to 319, *CIL* VI, 508; Duthoy 1969: 17, num. 21.

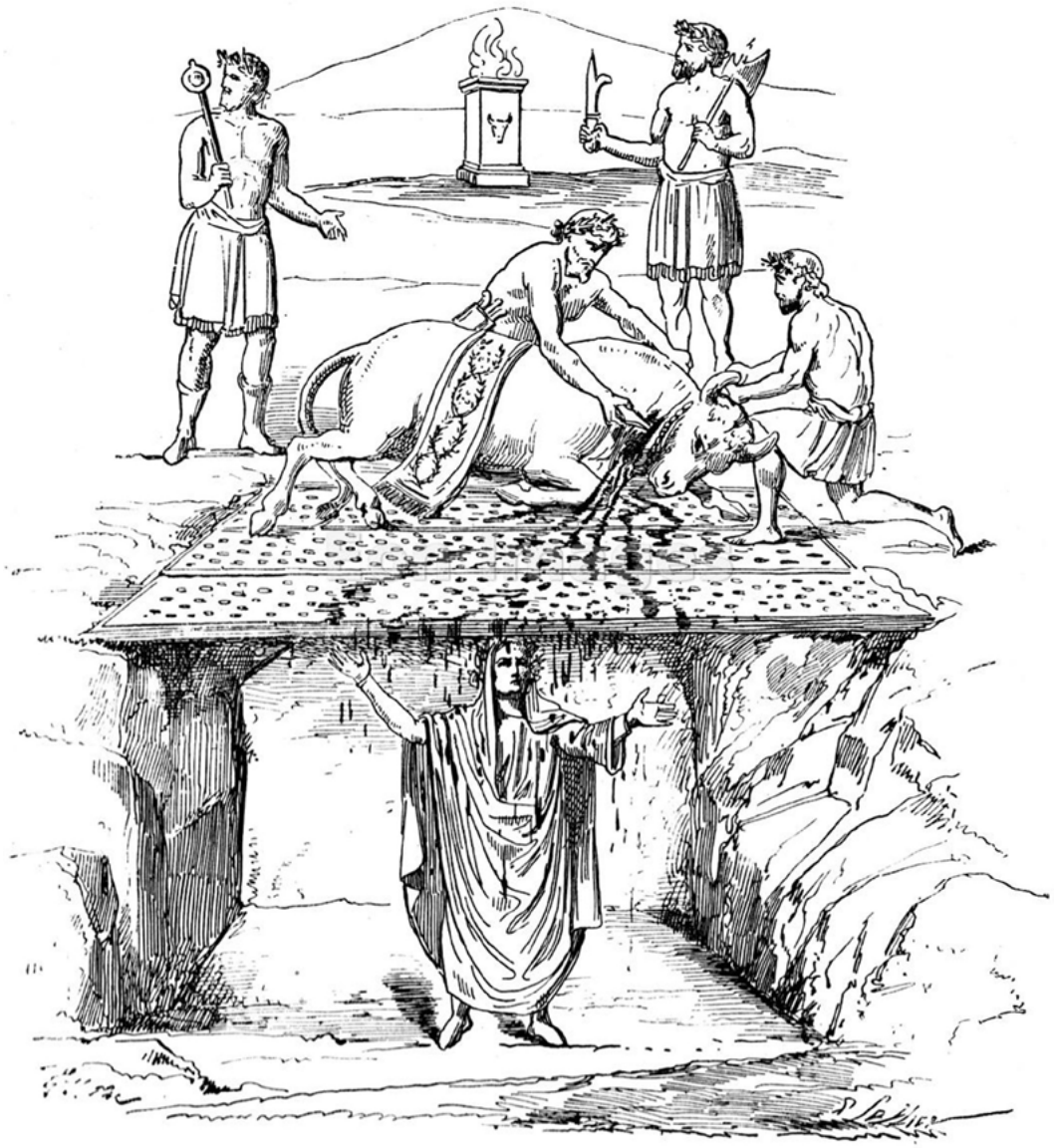
[195] Duthoy 1969: 95-101. Most scholars agree that *cernus* (from Greek word *kernos* meaning ritual vessel with several sub-divisions or small jars used for vegetables and liquids that were offered in ritual sacrifice) was a ritual vessel and the term was used in the context of Magna Mater's cult in the 3rd century BC, Borgeaud 2004: 113. P. Borgeaud and J. Alvar are of opinion that the inscriptions from Mactar and Rome imply that *vires tauri* were could have been transported in *cernus*, Alvar 2008: 272.

[196] Duthoy 1969: 100-101.

[197] Rutter 1968: 236-238.

[198] The last phase of taurobolium is particular because of the inscriptions with verb *percipere,* the term *tauroboliatus* (initiated person) and changed performance of the ritual. Prudentius described the ritual in detail, with *summus sacerdos* as the initiated: the priest dressed in ceremonial clothes, descended to a pit below the ground (*fossa sanguinis*), covered by perforated boards. The bull which is to be sacrificed is brought to stand on the boards and then, it is cut by *sacratum venabulum*. The animal's blood poured through the holes on the boards and covered the initiate inside the pit. After the bull's corpse is taken away, the dedicant comes out from the pit and is hailed by the witnesses to the ritual, Prudentius *Peristephanon* 10.1006-1050. This description given by Prudentius is confirmed by anonymus Christian writer, Rutter 1968: 240. Firmicus Maternus also touches the description of ritual' performing in his work against pagans, Firmicus Maternus *De Errore profanarum religionum* 27.8-28.1. The priest who underwent the ritual, was by the initiation to Magna Mater's cult symbolically born again and ready to serve the goddess. He would get symbols of the crown and golden bracelet, *occabus*, after his initiation, Vermaseren 1977:102-103; Turcan 1996: 49-51. However, in recent literature, questions about the credibility of Prudentius' account are raised – it is very unlikely that Prudentius witnessed a taurobolium or knew the details about the ritual, while no *fossa sanguinis* (although pits of that purpose were presumed in Ostia, at the locality Neuss-Gnadental and in so-called Cybele's temple in Felix Romuliana, Gamzigrad) is yet archaeologically confirmed, McLynn 1996; Alvar 2008: 261-264; Rieger 2004; Thomas 1984: 1525; Borgeaud 2004: 118-119; Beard 2012: 336-340.

[199] Not entering deeper in every existent critique on the account of R. Duthoy's book, I'll just mention the main ones: in 1972. year R. Turcan noticed that R. Duthoy's claim that epigraphical monuments with the verb *facere* belong only to the first phase of taurobolium, isn't correct,



Drawing of the reconstruction of the taurobolium
(Beard 2012: 337, fig. 12.2)

Many scholars have studied the ritus of *taurobolium*, but only some, like P. Borgeaud, have tried to interpret its symbolism. Following the suppositions of W. Burkert, P. Borgeaud drew attention to the myth told by Clement of Alexandria about the goddess Deo and Zeus, which, in his opinion, explains the ritual of the *taurobolium*. The mythical account presented by Clement of Alexandria at the beginning of the 3rd century refers to the goddess of Eleusis and the patroness of the mysteries, Deo (who was identified with Rhea or Magna Mater) and her wrath at Zeus, which ends with his pretending to have castrated himself and throwing his genitals on Deo's breast (he took the genitals of a ram, pretending they were his own).[200] P. Borgeaud further discusses that the myth also explains why during the initiation through the taurobolic rite, Magna Mater's devotees say the symbolic words 'I have eaten of the drum, I have drunk of the cymbal, I have carried the *kernos*, I have plunged beneath the curtain.' Unlike Clement of

because of the existence of the monument with the verb dated to the period between 295 and 313, that is into the second phase of taurobolium development, Turcan 1972: 85. P. Borgeaud also criticized R. Duthoy's phase division of the development of taurobolium and its accuracy, on the basis that epigraphical monuments alone don't make sufficient argument for making the right conclusions about the evolution of the ritual, Borgeaud 2004: 113.

[200] The Eleusinian myth about goddess Deo describes Zeus disguised as a bull making love to Deo. In one moment of her anger, Deo transforms herself into Brimo. Then Zeus pretends that he castrated himself (actually he took ram's testicles instead of his own) and throws them on Deo's breast. P. Borgeaud asserts that philosophical ideas close to Orphism influenced the writing of Clement of Alexandria, who actually aspired to return Magna Mater in a dignified way to Greek historical sources, through philosophical contemplations about mystery rituals and cults, Borgeaud 2004: 116-117.

Alexandria, Firmicus Maternus offers a slightly different form of what was pronounced during the initiation 'I have eaten from the drum, drunk from the cymbal, I have become a priest of Attis'.[201] Therefore, it can be concluded that part of the myth where Zeus castrates a ram and throws his genitals instead of his own to Deo's breast, symbolically represents the essence of a *taurobolium*, as an animal castration which substitutes a human castration, with the ultimate goal of introducing Romans into the cult of Magna Mater, by avoiding the castration of the initiates.[202] J. Alvar suggests that after initiation, the initiated took part in a ritual banquet (this symbolised his or her marriage feast, which commemorated the union with the goddess) and then the initiate would proceed to a sacred chamber where the sacred marriage was performed.[203] Thus the initiate completed all the rituals and was fully introduced into the secrets of Magna Mater's cult. The taurobolium could be private or public,[204]individual or collective.[205] In 394, the anonymous writer of the *Carmen contra paganos* mentions that the ritual was repeated every 20 years. Women were involved in taurobolium, not only as dedicants or initiates, but also as priestesses who led the sacrificial ritual[206] and in some cases, like in the altars from Lectoure (dated to 239)[207] and Alzey (dated to 237),[208] they presumably repeated the role of the goddess Cybele / Magna Mater, instead of a *gallus*, and sacrificed the genitals of the initiated and buried them.[209]

At the end of this brief digression about the significance of the sacrifice rituals of the *taurobolium* and *criobolium*, existing scholars' polemics about the meaning of the terms *natalicii vires*[210] and *natalicium* should be mentioned. The terms are attested on *taurobolium* or *criobolium* altars. Authors such as E. Espérandieu, H. Hepding and H. Graillot thought that, in the context of the *taurobolium*, the word *natalicium* indicated that the initiation act of a devotee represented his new birth.[211] Onomastic-epigraphic analysis of the 2nd and 3rd century inscriptions showed that the *taurobolium* and *criobolium* were reserved for wealthier citizens,[212] with the *taurobolium* becoming almost a privilege for members of the aristocracy during the 4th century.[213]

After the official inclusion of the *taurobolium* into the cult of Magna Mater, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, votive altars commemorating initiation through the *taurobolium* become more numerous, as Magna Mater's image continued to be presented on coins.[214] Herodian notes that a certain Martinus, a former soldier and criminal, planned to assassinate Commodus during the *Megalensia*, but he was betrayed before the beginning of the festivities and subsequently beheaded. As a gesture of his thanks to Magna Mater, Commodus performed sacrifices in her honour and thanked the goddess, believing that she had saved his life.[215] As R. B. E. Smith notices, the development of Magna Mater's cult during the Antonine period led to the point where festivities in her honour became 'an important medium for the expression of loyalty to the Emperor.'[216] A unique type of iconographic representation of Magna

[201] Lancellotti 2002: 113; R. Turcan concludes that only the ones who underwent the mystic ritual, could become the priests of god Attis, Turcan 1996: 53.

[202] Borgeaud 2004: 115. R. Turcan is of opinion that the formula's part 'I have plunged beneath the curtain', can also imply the bridal chamber of Magna Mater and consummation of her matrimony with god Attis. Therefore, R. Turcan assumes that the mentioned part of the formula symbolically represents a mystical union between Magna Mater and initiate, that is *hierogamos* - holy matrimony between them, Turcan 1996: 53. A. J. Festugièr thinks that the ritual of initiation was ending in the room where Magna Mater's statue was situated and making the analogy between the textual version of Clement of Alexandria and orphic formulas, he observes the strong similarity between them and presumes that in the final part of the initiation ritual, the initiate by merging with the goddess, actually 'dies' in a symbolic way (*voluntaria mors*) to be resurrected afterwards, like god Attis, Festugièr 1935: 381-396.

[203] Alvar 2008: 279-280.

[204] J. Alvar reminds of H. Graillot conclusions that two forms of taurobolium could be distinguished – one for the Roman emperor and the other, private one. However, the ritual that was paid by the individual who was the main beneficiary (the 'private' taurobolium) was also celebrated with a collective meaning in J. Alvar's opinion, because of the testimonies that attest that although not being the ones who were directly involved in the ritual, Magna Mater's worshippers could witness the private taurobolium, Alvar 2008: 269, ft. 233.a

[205] On an altar from Narbonne, a collective taurobolium is recorded, *CIL* XII, 4321.

[206] Gaspar 2012: 134.

[207] *CIL* XIII, 510.

[208] *AE* 2007, 1047.

[209] On both altars, the eviration of certain slave Eutyches (altar from Lectoure) and certain *gallus* Patricus Cybelicus (altar from Alzey) is mentioned. Two women who are mentioned on the altars, Valeria Gemina and Pacatia Pacata, received the testicles of two men in the name of the goddess and probably did, as Cybele has done in the myth – washed them, anointed them and buried them, Spickermann 2015: 227-229.

[210] According to the majority of authors, *natalicii vires* were bull's genitalia, sacrificed on the birthday of the female dedicants, Graillot 1912: 172; Duthoy 1969: 106, ft.; Rutter 1968: 233, num. 24; Spickermann 2015: 226.

[211] Duthoy 1969: 106; Hepding 1903: 198; Graillot 1912: 172. R. Turcan interprets the word *aeternus* (not seldomly present on the epigraphic monuments which commemorate taurobolium) as the implication of the dedicant's revitalization, his newly born strength and vitality, obtained by symbolically cleansing himself with the blood of the sacrificed bull, Turcan 1996: 52.

[212] Duthoy 1969: 93-94, 96-97.

[213] The symbolism of the taurobolium had a specific meaning for Roman senators in the 4th century, due to the privileges that were taken from them and strengthening of the Christianity, contrary to the weaker paganism, Rutter 1968: 342; Thomas 1984: 1524; Borgeaud 2004: 119.

[214] During the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, medallions and coins with the image of Magna Mater on the reverse, with sometimes epithet *Conservatrix,* are known. The goddess is shown either enthroned or driving *biga* with lions, Graillot 1912: 353, ft; Turcan 1983: 36-37.

[215] Martinus dressed in the uniform of a praetorian soldier, hoping that he would mingle with the true praetorians and after watching the procession in the honour of Magna Mater, would attack and kill Commodus. However, one of his close conspirators betrayed his plan and even before he arrived at the scene of the festivities, he was seized and beheaded. Herodian further says that the emperor's preservation from the danger was celebrated even after the Megalensia were over, Herodian, *Roman History,* I 10.1-7; Grant 1994: 71.

[216] Smith 2013: 114.

Mater on coins appeared during the reign of Pertinax – the goddess is presented on the reverse, sacrificing above the altar, with a child on her right side, who is sitting on a globe with hands raised.[217] In the context of the respect and worship of Magna Mater, the reign of Septimius Severus was similar to the reign of Antoninus Pius. Temples were built in the goddess's honour and she appeared continually on coinage, together with the empress Julia Domna.[218] Since Elagabalus' short reign in a religious context is known for his wish and intent to subordinate all the cults to the cult of Sol Invictus, Magna Mater's sacred symbol (black meteorite) was, together with all sacred images of other deities, transferred to the temple of Elagabalium on Palatine.[219] Nevertheless, the cult of the goddess also attracted Elagabalus's attention and Aelius Lampridius writes that the emperor went through the castration and commemorated taurobolium, thus becoming initiated to Magna Mater's cult, becoming her priest.[220] Representations of the goddess do not appear on Elagabalus' coinage, but they are present on the coins of the emperor's spouse, Julia Soemias.[221] During the well-known pagan renaissance, Emperor Julian, inspired by Neoplatonism, tried to restore Magna Mater's dignity and reputation as she once had and to symbolically explain her cult in his panegyric 'Hymn to the Mother of the Gods'.[222] The beginning and end of the 'Hymn to the Mother of the Gods' imply that Julian was perhaps initiated into the goddess's cult, as Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, his governor of Achaea was,[223]beside Quintus Aurelius Symmachus[224] and Virius Nihomachus Flavianus, some of the leading aristocrats who were at the head of the anti-Christian party, preservers of the old cults and advocates for the pagan revival in the 4th century.[225] Praetextatus' intent to restore paganism can be seen in his various activities, such as actively advocating paganism, tearing down private buildings built adjacent to temples (which disturbed the nobility of pagan temples), and restoring the temple (or only statues) of Dei Consentes. Praetextatus accumulated multiple priesthoods; he was an *augur*, *pontifex Vestae*, *pontifex Solis* and *quindecimvir*, that is he was a priest of four major collegia.[226]After his death in 384, Symmachus took over the leadership of the senatorial pagan movement, but did not show any particular interest for Eastern cults,[227] choosing to maintain the *status quo* in the context of asking for the toleration of traditional deities.[228] During his life, a clash between his

[217] Beside the described presentation of the goddess, a formula *dis gentoribus* also appears on the coins during Pertinax' reign, which in R. Turcan's opinion refers to the emperor's divine protectors, Turcan 1983: 39.

[218] In Carthage, near the temple of god Asclepius, Septimius Severus built a sanctuary to Magna Mater, restored in the 4th century, Vermaseren 1977: 128. The coins issued in the period between 196 and 211, with the image of Julia Domna on the avers and Magna Mater on the revers, indicate that Julia Domna, unlike Faustina, expressing her respect to the goddess, was inclined to equate with the deity, in the context of promoting herself as 'mother of all and everything'. In the coins of Julia Domna, Magna Mater is presented enthroned, holding tympanum, sometimes sceptre, Turcan 1983: 39-41. Previous is also confirmed with the medallions and coins issued between 203 and 220 in Carthage, with the legend *Indulgentia Augg in Cart(agine)*, with Julia Domna's bust on the avers and image of Magna Mater – Caelestis riding a horse on the reverse, which M. J. Vermaseren holds for the presentation of Julia Domna as Magna Mater, Vermaseren 1977: 139.

[219] The subordination of all the most important cults to the cult of Sol Invictus was marked by Elagabalus' transferring of the sacred image of Magna Mater, Vesta's fire, the Palladium, the shields of the Salii and all that Romans held for sacred to them to the new temple, Elagabalium, *Historia Augusta Elagabalus,* 1.6.

[220] J. B. Rutter, however, thinks that Elagabalus wasn't castrated, but that he celebrated a taurobolium (*tauroboliatus est*), Rutter 1968: 235. As for his whims, in his wish to imitate Magna Mater, he once drove the chariot with four lions copying the goddess in detail, by wearing even the exact clothes as she was presented in, *Historia Augusta Elagabalus,* 28. 1-3.

[221] The sestertii issued between 218 and 222 show on the avers the bust of Julia Soemis and Magna Mater enthroned holding a small ram and tympanum, Turcan 1983: 44.

[222] At the beginning of the hymn, Julian writes that it is a work of a philosopher and theologist. In the 'Hymn to the Mother of the Gods', Julian actually through Neoplatonistic views, asks and answers the questions about Metroac cult – for him, Magna Mater is the source of all creative gods, while Attis is the agent between the goddess and material world. Julian states that the mystic cults actually encompass the teachings about creation and laws of the Universe and writes about his own philosophical observations about the festivities in the honour of Magna Mater and Attis, again in a symbolical manner, through the principles of the Neoplatonistic school, Julian, *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods.*

[223] Vittius Agorius Praetextatus was one of the most ardent advocates of the paganism in the 4th century, in political and religious life in Rome. The funerary monument built to him by his wife, Aconia Fabia Paulina priestess of Metroac cult, praises Praetextatus as the one who introduces his wife to the mystic cults of Magna Mater and Attis, Vermaseren 1977: 109-110.

[224] The correspondence between Symmachus, Praetextatus and Flavianus is of great importance for the studying of the religious conditions in the 4th century in Rome. In 394 Flavianus conducted the restoration of a public cult of Magna Mater and Attis, celebration of Megalensia and Floralia and he restored Hercules' temple in Ostia. However, Symmachus himself was a serious critic of Magna Mater's clergy selected among senators and he criticized Flavianus for leaving Rome at the time of Magna Mater's festivities, but praised aristocrats from Benevento for their loyalty to the pagan cults, Matthews 1973: 175-195.

[225] Smith 2013: 137. While still a proconsul of Achaia, Praetextatus successfully opposed to Valentinian's law against nocturnal rites in 364, while afterwards when he was made *praefectus urbi* in 367 in Rome, he restored the Porticus Deorum Consentium and its statues on the Forum Romanum, which in the opinion of H. Bloch was perhaps Praetextatus' attempt to restore the cult of the twelve gods in its form from the period of Republic and the early Empire. Praetextatus was a member of three out of four *collegia* and was involved in the cults of Hercules and Liber and the mysteries of Eleusis, Hecate of Aegina, Serapis, Magna Mater and Mithras, Bloch 1945: 204-205.

[226] Iara 2015: 173. Praetextatus was initiated into the rites of Hercules and Liber Pater, Hecate, Serapis, Magna Mater, Mithras and he had received the mysteries at Eleusis, Matthews 1973: 179.

[227] It is presumed on the evidence of Symmachus activities and the collection of his 900 letters, that he didn't have any interest in Oriental cults, but J. F. Matthews thinks that it is a severe and not just opinion, because although Symmachus is not expressing his personal religious attitudes in his letters, it is clear from two letters particularly (one addressed to Ambrose of Milan, the other to the younger Nicomachus Flavianus), that even if he had an interest in Oriental cults, it was too personal for him to express it in conventional letters, Matthews 1973: 191-194.

[228] Bloch 1945: 209, 216-218. Symmachus' interest for the cult of goddess Vesta is well-known as his building or restoration of a temple to the goddess Flora, Robinson 1915: 96-97. In the 4th century, other pagan temples were restorated by the Roman senate or senators,

tolerant attitudes and the majority of pagan senators who followed the lead of Praetextatus occurred and the pagan revival was seriously endangered, particularly during the reign of Theodosius, who proclaimed anti-pagan laws in 391 and 392.[229] However in 394, Virius Nicomachus Flavianus was appointed consul and tried to resurrect the cults of Jupiter, Saturnus, Mercury, Vulcanus, Mithras-Sol, Liber, Trivia, Serapis, Anubis, Isis, Ceres, Proserpina, Magna Mater and Attis.[230] The festivities of the goddesses Isis and Magna Mater were celebrated by processions led by Flavianus himself (it is also possible that the so-called Basilica Hilariana on Caelian Hill was associated with the cult of Magna Mater in that period) and like Praetextatus he also proclaimed the equitation of Attis and Sol. In *Carmen adversus Flavianum*, not only his adoration towards the cults of Isis and Magna Mater was attacked, but also his consulting of Sibylline books and haruspices. Flavianus' further efforts to promote the revival of not only Eastern, but also traditional Roman cults, such as Hercules' cult for example, were terminated with his suicide, after his defeat by Theodosius in the battle of the Frigudus in 394.[231]

Thus, the cult of Magna Mater lived through its own renaissance during the 4th century, particularly among the aristocracy, 22 inscriptions were dedicated to the goddess by senators alone, in the period between 305 and 390.[232] However, after Julian's death, Christian antagonism towards the cults of Magna Mater and Attis became more and more serious, resulting in the last *taurobolium* being held in 390, in Phrygianum and in *contorniates* (commemorative medallions) depicting Magna Mater, dated to the late 4th century. On three of the *contorniates*, Magna Mater is presented seated at the entrance of a temple, with the legend *Matri Deum Salutari*. In scholarly literature a presumption that the presented temple is actually Phrygianum has been made and, if true, then the temple was of public significance, as *contorniates* were particularly propagandist items, which were distributed from the middle of the 4th century.[233] *Ludi Megalenses*[234] were still celebrated from 4th to 10th April in the middle of the 4th century (attested in the Chronography of 354), but in the calendar of Polemius Silvius from 448/449, there is only a mention of *ludi circenses* held from 4th to 10th April, without any association with the cult of Magna Mater.[235] Towards the end of the 4th century, no games or propagandist items could prevent the further deterioration of the cult of Magna Mater, whose sanctuaries and statues were destroyed and desecrated, like the statue of the goddess in Palatine from whose chest Serena pulled a necklace, thus sacrileging the goddess's sacred image, or worse, when the goddess's sacred images were damaged or destroyed by the Christians.[236]

1.2. Epigraphic and archaeological monuments of Cybele/Magna Mater in Central Balkans

It is quite surprising that on a territory whose southern part was under strong Greek influence from the 7th century BC, the cult of Cybele/Magna Mater has been confirmed with fewer epigraphic and archaeological monuments than would be expected. However, their analysis shows a clear polarisation in the context of the cultural influences present on the localities where the monuments were found. Two epigraphic monuments dedicated to Magna Mater were found in the colonies, Ratiaria and Viminacium, two large urban centres where a diverse population by origin and provenience lived. The first epigraphic monument is a votive altar found in Ratiaria, dedicated to *Mater Deum Augusta* (cat. 1). The epithet *Augusta* implies a connection with the official cult – the first Roman empress to whose name the epithet was added was Livia and, from 27 BC, the epithet appears with the goddess' names.[237]As with the epithet *Augustus,* in the earliest period of its usage, the epithet *Augusta* referred to the close connection between the Roman emperor and the goddess in question, to her divine assistance to the advantage of the ruler and his family.[238] Later, the epithet indicated that the emperor and members of his family were under the protection

like the temple of Saturn, the temple of Bonus Eventus, the temple of Apollo, the temple of Isis and the temple of Hercules in Ostia, Iara 2015: 177.

229 Belayche 2009: 191-208.

230 Ibid: 230.

231 Matthews 1973: 180.

232 Browning 1978: 45; Iara 2015: 181.

233 Smith 2013: 175.

234 *Ludi Megalenses* still comprehended beside the participation of *archigallus*, *galli*, the participation of *apparatores* who were priests' assistants, *tibicenes* who played the flute during the ceremonial procession, *tympanistriae* who played on tympana, *cymbalistriae* who played cymbala and *hymnologi* who sang hymns in honour of Magna Mater, Dubosson-Sbriglione 2018: 192-202.

235 Dubosson-Sbriglione 2018: 84.

236 The sacrilege that Serena committed in the Metroon in Palatine is described by Zosimus. He states that Serena intending to insult some deities, took off some ornaments that were around the neck of Magna Mater's statue and placed them upon her own neck. The last of the Vestal Virgins, an old woman, scolded her severely, but the girl not only replied to her very sharply, but ordered her attendants to carry the old woman away. As she was leaving the temple, the old priestess cursed Serena, her husband and her children for the sacrilege done to the goddess, Zosimus, *New History*, 5.38.

237 The epithet *Augusta* explicitly honoured the Roman empress, designated the empresses' power and her almost divine status. As the epithet *Augustus,* the epithet *Augusta* presented, as an epithet of the goddess, connection between the particular goddess and the emperor's house, implying that the emperor has the goddess's approval and support in all his endeavours, Spaeth 2010: 170-171; The epithet is confirmed not only with the names of the Roman emperors' spouses, but also with the names of female members of the imperial family, like for example, Nero's daughter Claudia or Trajan's sister, Ulpia Martiana, McCullough 2007:92-93.

238 D. Fishwick quotes the opinion of A. D. Nock, that the dedicants who added to the names of certain goddesses the epithet *Augusta* , wished the blessing of that particular goddess for the emperor and his family. However, D. Fishwick opposes to A. D. Nock's opinion and argues that the dedicants used the epithet *Augusta* in its general meaning 'royal, imperial', Fishwick 1991: 448-449.

of the deity that bore the epithet Augustus/Augusta, with the possibility of a broader connotation of designating the deity in question as 'imperial, holy'.[239] Dedications to the goddess Magna Mater with the epithet *Augusta* are not frequent in the Roman Empire and are known from the provinces of Moesia Superior, Africa Proconsularis and Numidia.[240] Beside the votive altar from Ratiaria, only two more dedications to Magna Mater Augusta are known from the European part of the Roman Empire - from Lyon (Lugdunum) and Senia (Senj, Dalmatia).[241] The dedicants were soldiers, members of their families or members of the *collegium dendrophorum*.[242] Unfortunately, neither the name nor the profession of the dedicant are known, or even the reason for the Ratiaria dedication, but since the altar was probably found in a military camp, we can presume that the dedicant was a soldier (or a person associated with the army), who dedicated the altar in the first half of the 2nd century.[243] The second altar erected to *Mater Deum* was discovered in the locality of Čair in Kostolac, Viminacium and the reason of dedication is the restoration of Neptune's temple in Viminacium (cat. 2). Single dedications to *Mater Deum* were usual in the Roman Empire, particularly on the territories of Dalmatia, Italy, Numidia, Africa Proconsularis, Gallia Narbonensis, etc. The dedicant of the Viminacium votive altar, Gaius Valerius Vibianus, dedicated the statue of the goddess (*signum Matris deum*) and gave 2,000 sestertii for the restoration of Neptune's temple.[244] The gentile name *Valerius* is frequent on Central Balkan monuments, while the cognomen *Vibianus* appears on two more monuments from Dalmatia.[245] Perhaps the dedicant was from Dalmatia by origin and his profession could support such a hypothesis, because he was *nautarum quinquennalis*, that is, he was involved in river transportation or trading.[246] A motif of a dolphin is carved on the Viminacium monument, similar to the relief from Potaissa in Dacia, which is presumably dedicated to Magna Mater and Attis.[247] The gift of 2,000 sestertii implies that Gaius Valerius Vibianus had significant finances and the presence of the *tria nomina,* as well as the shape of the letters, suggest the second half of the 2nd century as the probable period when the altar was erected.

Marble sculptures and statues of Magna Mater represent a significant group of the goddess's cult monuments in the Central Balkan territory. Although only six fragmented sculptures and statues are known, they all represent the same iconographic type – a mature woman sitting on a throne, in a long chiton with short or long sleeves, sometimes with a himation over her shoulders, wearing a diadem and a veil or a mural crown on her head. On one or both sides of her throne, sitting or lying lion figures are presented. On some monuments typical goddess attributes, like a tympanum, are also shown. This type of Magna Mater representation belongs to the already mentioned type of goddess statues sculpted after the statue of Agoracritas from the 5th century BC.[248] The fragmentary state of all known sculptures and statues from Central Balkan provinces aggravates the analysis and interpretation of the monuments' iconography and stylistic characteristics and complicates presumptions about possible artisans and workshops.[249] From six marble sculptures and statues, four can be identified

[239] For more details see Fishwick 1978: 378. The epithet *Augusta* is on the territory of Central Balkans, known with the names of other goddesses like Nemesis, *IMS* I: 54, n. 19 and *IMS* VI: 56, n. 12; Ceres *IMS* II: 62, n. 3; Diana *IMS* III/2: 63-65, n. 2, 3 and 4, 71-72, n. 14. *ILJug* 1986, 1820; Venus *AE* 1998, 1025 and *AE* 1999, 1222.

[240] The dedications to Magna Mater with the epithet *Augusta* are attested in: Africa Proconsularis *CIL* 8, 1776, 16440, 23400 and 23401; Numidia *AE* 1911, 22; *AE* 1913, 24; *AE* 1955, 142; *AE* 1957, 92a; *CIL* 8, 2230.

[241] *CIL* VIII, 1756. The altar from Lugdunum is commemorating a taurobolium; for the altar from Senj (Senia) see Medini 1981: 494, num. 2.

[242] For example, the altar from the locality Djamila in Numidia, *magister dendrophorum flamen* Caecilius Paulinus dedicates to Magna Mater Augusta, *AE* 1911: 22.

[243] *CCCA* VI: 115, num. 383.

[244] A votive monument dedicated to god Neptune with the epithet Conservator was found in Viminacium dating to the end of the 3rd century, which confirms along with the monument dedicated to Magna Mater and Neptune, that the temple of Neptune existed in Viminacium, *IMS* II, 78-79, num. 38.

[245] Gentile name Valerius is very often in Roman provinces of Central Balkans. However, the name Vibianus is only confirmed on two votive monuments from Split (Spalatum), *AE* 1979, 448; *ILJug* 1986, 2025.

[246] This hypothesis would be supported not only by the mention of Vibianus being the *quinquennalis* of the *collegium nautarum* in the inscription, but also the presentation of the dolphin on the monument, symbol of Neptune, protector of the marital trades. The presentations of dolphin/dolphins on the Central Balkans' monuments are known from the end of the 1st to the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century, under the artistic influences of Pannonia and Dalmatia. The symbolism of dolphin is multiple and various – depending on which part of the monument dolphin appears, it can be connected with different deities like Apollo, Aphrodite, Neptune, Eros or Dionysus. The role of the dolphin as the saviour of different mythological persons from drowning led to the opinions that its presentation on the funerary monuments symbolizes its role as the guide of the souls of the deceased to the realm of the dead, that is its role of psychopomp, Cumont 1942: 155. While dolphin is a popular motif on Dalmatia's monuments (regions of Duvanjsko, Livanjsko and Glamočko polje), it is not so frequently met on Moesia Superior's monuments, Зотовић 1995: 54. Many authors discussed the symbolism of dolphin in votive and funerary monuments of Central Balkans, like Kondić 1965: 187-188, Dautova-Ruševljanin 1983: 48, Zotović 1995: 54-55, Pilipović 2004: 355-383, Milovanović 2009: 18-20. Their conclusions are somewhat uniform, that the image of dolphin is typical Roman motif, frequent in northern Italy and western provinces, which appears sporadically on the monuments from big urban centres of Moesia Superior like Ratiaria, Singidunum, Viminacium and Scupi.

[247] A relief discovered in Potaissa presumably shows goddess Magna Mater and her paredros Attis. Beside the images of the deities, on the monument motives of the syrinx and a dolphin are presented. M. J. Vermaseren suggests that the dolphin symbolized the continuance of life after death, *CCCA* V: 144-145, num. 491; Ota, Szabó 2015: 233.

[248] Agorakritos' statue is the most frequently copied statue of Magna Mater in the whole Roman Empire, which is attested by numerous sculptures and statues of this iconographical type from all Roman provinces, Naumann 1983: 310-342, num. 123-421.

[249] The sculptures and statues of Magna Mater from Roman Central Balkans are usually damaged in the area of the head, upper part of the body and therefore are missing the headdresses and attributes.

with certainty as Magna Mater representations, while two statues are somewhat disputable.

The first marble statue was found in the locality of Novo Selo near Prilep, but it is in a very fragmented state (cat. 3). The goddess's head, both arms and the lions' heads are missing, therefore, it can only be assumed with which attributes the goddess was represented. Magna Mater is dressed in a long, richly folded dress, resting her feet on a low stool, sitting on a throne without sides. The statue represents a canonical image of the goddess, well known in the Roman period. Therefore, although the attributes are missing from her hands, we can assume that the deity was holding a sceptre, a patera or a tympanum. It is a very solid, skilfully modelled representation of the goddess, typical for the period from the second half of the 2nd century.[250]

A relief, on which the Magna Mater is presented inside an aedicula, was found in Stobi and is much better preserved that other sculptural and statuary monuments of the goddess from the Central Balkan territory (cat. 4). Magna Mater is presented en face, inside an *aedicula*, sitting on a throne, with a mural crown on her head and her feet resting on a low stool. She is dressed in a long dress, with long sleeves, belted under the chest with a Hercules knot. Her hands are resting on the heads of lions, who are flanking the throne.[251] In the outer angles of the *aedicula*, the remains of *acroteria* and *palmettes* can be seen. Beside her left shoulder, a tympanum is presented hanging on the wall.[252] On the earliest representations of Magna Mater inside an *aedicula*, the goddess is standing, but from the second half of the 6th century BC, the goddess is presented seated, with the attribute of a tympanum.[253] These kinds of reliefs of small dimensions were mostly ex-votos to the goddess, although some of them were found as grave goods.[254] What the function of the relief from Stobi was, we cannot presume without knowledge of the context in which it was found, but it could have been an ex-voto. Stylistically, the relief shares certain similarities with the fragmented marble statue of the goddess from Pula (*Colonia Pietas Iulia Pola Pollentia Herculanea*), which was also standing inside a niche.[255] However, the closest analogies in the fragmented relief from Amphipolis and monuments from Thessaloniki and Kozani could indicate the votive character of the Magna Mater statue from Stobi, dated to the 2nd century.[256]

Of the statue of unknown provenience, only its upper part is preserved, which represents a goddess's head and a torso without arms (cat. 5). The remains of the backrest of the throne, attest that she was sitting. The head of the statue is well modelled, her hair is tied into two braids and she wears a long veil with a diadem. Over her left shoulder, a draped himation is presented, belted under her chest. G. Seure suggested, on the basis of the analogy with the throned statue of Magna Mater from Serdica, that the goddess held a patera in one hand and a sceptre in the other.[257]Lj. Zotović and M. J. Vermaseren agreed with G. Seure's opinion, that the statue represented a Demeter-Hera iconographical type of Magna Mater statue. I would add that other known statues of this type, such as a monument in Liverpool, confirm G. Seure's suggestion.[258] The syncretism of Magna Mater and Demeter is well known in Greek religion – Pausanias writes about the sanctuary on the Agora at Megalopolis, where altars dedicated to Magna Mater and Demeter (and Persephone) were placed together.[259] K. Summers thinks that the fragmented sculptural group of Demeter and Persephone with the companions of Cybele, *couretes*, was a work of the sculptor Damophon of Messene and represents a characteristic syncretistic image of Cybele and Demeter.[260] In the case of the marble statue of unknown provenience, the poor quality of the marble used and

[250] V. Sokolovska dates the statue to the 2nd century, while S. Düll suggests the second half of the 2nd century, Соколовска 1988: 124; Düll 1977: 417.

[251] The presentations of Magna Mater enthroned with her hands resting on the lions' heads (animals are either standing or sitting beside each side of the throne), are known from the Hellenistic period, Vermaseren 1977: 72, fig. 27.

[252] On Greek presentations of Magna Mater, the goddess almost always holds the tympanum in her left hand or the instrument is shown on her left side. As the libation bowl – *phiale*, tympanum symbolizes the ritual practices of the goddess's adherents and not the goddess herself, Roller 1999: 148.

[253] As it was already mentioned, the earliest presentations of Magna Mater inside the *aedicule* are known from Smyrna, Eritrea, Miletus, Ephesus and Didyma and L. E. Roller states that from there, this iconographic type was transferred to Aegean islands of Samos, Chios, Tassos and further to the Sicily, south Italy, Marseille, Roller 1999:131. The goddess is shown enthroned, wearing a long dress and low crown with a veil, sometimes holding a small lion figure in her lap, Ibid: 131-122. The earliest presentations of Magna Mater with tympanum are two reliefs from Thassos, as the relief from Ephesus, Naumann 1983: num. 114, num. 64. For more details see Naumann 1983: 136 and Roller 1999: 136.

[254] Ibid: 137.

[255] V. Jurkić Girardi observes that not treated backside of the statue, implies that it was standing inside the niche, Jurkić Girardi 1972: 59, num. 8, T. VI-VII, 1-2.

[256] Three figurines found in a votive deposit from a rustic shrine of Cybele and Attis (M. J. Vermaseren questions its connection to the nearby cemetery), present Cybele on a high-backed throne, inside the aedicula, with a tympanum and a patera, *CCCA* VI, 72, n. 226; S. Düll suggests the half of the 3rd century as the period of statue's modelling, but V. Sokolovska argues that analogue monuments imply an earlier dating, Düll 1977: 154; Соколовска 1988: 124.

[257] G. Seure thinks that the statue from Serdica represents the closest analogy to the statue of Magna Mater of unknown provenience. The statue from Serdica shows the goddess enthroned, with patera in one hand and probably sceptre in the other hand. Two lions are flanking her throne with high backrest, Seure 1922: 273, fig. 10; *CCCA* V, 100, num. 340.

[258] *CCCA* VII, 20, num. 65.

[259] The sanctuary, according to Pausanias, was situated within the agora and was built probably around 370-371 BC. Some 15m to the east of the temple, three small altars were found, dedicated to Cybele, Demeter and Persephone, together with numerous votive gifts offered to the goddesses.

[260] Summers 1996: 353.

the mediocre skill of the modelling, imply a local artisan who sculpted the statue in the 2nd or 3rd century.

Two statues of disputable identification were found at Mediana, Niš (Naissus) and Karataš (Diana). The marble fragmented statue from Mediana, similarly to the statue from Novo Selo, was found in a quite damaged state - only the torso of a female figure is preserved, in a sitting position, dressed in a chiton with a himation (cat. 6). The folds of the himation are made in deep relief and, thus, differ from the richly draped chiton modelled in shallow relief. The chiton is belted right under the woman's chest, on which the long, curly hair of the goddess falls. All these details allow the hypothesis that the fragmented female statue from Mediana represents the iconographical type of a throned Magna Mater, similar to other goddess statues from the Central Balkans territory. The deity probably wore a mural crown or diadem on her head and held some of the usual attributes (patera, sceptre, cornucopia, etc) in her hands. Beside the preserved part of the throne, two seated lions were probably presented. Iconographical details do not allow the assumption of any closer analogies, but stylistic similarities can be found in the statue of Magna Mater in the Metropolitan Museum and the statue of Magna Mater from Rome.[261] The plasticity of the statue's modelling dates it to the beginning of the 4th century.[262]

The other marble statue, which is questionable in the context of her certain identification as a representation of Magna Mater, was found in Karataš (Diana) on the Danube Limes and represents a woman with a diadem and a veil (cat. 7). Her hair is carefully gathered under the diadem and her facial features are well modelled, with details such as emphasised eyebrow arches, narrow eyes and a massive chin which imply a provincial origin of the artisan. The presentation of Magna Mater or her priestess can be presumed.[263] Images of the goddess with a diadem and veil are known from the relief in Pireus and the already mentioned statue in Liverpool, while the representation of the goddess with just a veil are also attested, such as on the votive stele dedicated to Meter Matyene from the goddess's sanctuary in Philadelphia, dated to the 2nd century.[264] However, Magna Mater's priestesses were represented in the same manner, as, for example, Laberia Felicla in the Vatican museum,[265] the priestess from Petovio[266] or the priestess from a funerary monument discovered in Pula.[267] From the stylistic features of the Karataš statue, it can be dated to the end of the 2nd or the first decades of the 3rd century.

It is important to mention here the marble statuette which was, in earlier literature, identified as a statue of Magna Mater.[268] Although, at first glance, certain similarities exist, in the context of the throned figure, the statue cannot and does not represent the goddess Magna Mater. The fragmented marble statue in question was found in Kostolac, Viminacium and was identified as Magna Mater by Lj. Zotović in 1964.[269] The statue represents a figure seated on a throne, dressed in a long dress with short sleeves and a himation over her left shoulder. The left arm, right underarm and both feet are missing. The damaged state of the figure's head does not allow a more precise analysis, except to observe the wavy hair which falls on its shoulders.[270] Lj. Zotović identified the animal figure on the right side of the throne as a lion, while M. Tomović thought it was a panther. The throne's sides are decorated with squares with diagonal straps. The statuary presentation is probably a local work, done without much skill and quite coarsely, probably at the end of the 2nd or beginning of the 3rd century. After a careful inspection of the statue, I consider that it could be attributed to the corpus of Serapis' statues, which is indicated

[261] *LIMC* VIII/I, 759, n. 87.

[262] M. Tomović argues that the statue from Mediana dates from the beginning of the 4th century, while D. Srejović and A. Cermanović-Kuzmanović think that the statue was modelled during the first two decades of the 4th century, Tomović 1993: 92, num. 88; Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 154, num. 68;

[263] In Roman art priestesses, women in mourning, women praying, reputable Roman matrons and sometimes empresses, were shown with a veil, Tomović 1993: 92.

[264] The relief from Piraeus (now in Berlin museum, inv. num. K 106) shows enthroned Magna Mater, wearing diadem and veil on her head, holding patera in her right hand and tympanum in her left hand, *CCCA* II, 93, num. 310. Otherwise, presentations of Magna Mater with a veil (without or with a diadem, polos or mural crown) are numerous in Roman provinces, particularly in Moesia Inferior where were found: two reliefs from Philipopolis and village Radomir in the area of Philipopolis, *CCCA* VI, 103, num. 347 and 106, num. 359; two reliefs from Callatis, Ibid: 121, num. 406 and 122, num. 407; terracottas from Callatis, Ibid: 125, num. 421, 423 and 425; relief from Tomis, Ibid: 131, num. 446. In the votive stele from Meter Matyene's sanctuary in Philadelphia, the goddess is presented quite unusually, as a standing, veiled woman inside an aedicule, holding a lamb in her left hand (sacrificial animal) and patera (or tympanum?) in her outstretched right hand, flanked with two small lion figures. The dedication to Meter Matyene shows that the stele was erected by a Roman citizen of Greek origin (the text is in the Greek language), whose wish was obviously to present the goddess in a more spontaneous way, as a mortal, to soften her official and traditional image and to make it more familiar to her devotees, *CCCA* 1: 146-147, num. 487.

[265] Vermaseren 1977: 57, 109, num. 41.

[266] In earlier literature, marble female bust from Poetovio was interpreted as the representation of Magna Mater, but M. J. Vermaseren thinks that it could equally represent the priestess of the goddess, *CCCA* VI, 35, num. 112.

[267] The funerary stele of Obellia Maxima was found in the vicinity of Pula's amphitheatre (in front of the amphitheatre, near the road). The monument presents the figure of the deceased in square-shaped aedicule, with an unknown figure on the left side of the aedicule. On the right side of the monument, god Attis is presented in deep relief. It is presumed that the deceased, Obellia Maxima, could have been the priestess of Magna Mater, Jurkić-Girardi 1973: 49, T. III, fig. 1.

[268] Zotović 1964: 274, num. 8; Zotović 1966: 102, num. 46, Pl. XV, 2; Tomović 1993: 90-91, num. 87, fig. 29.1-3.

[269] Before that, it was mentioned as a catalogue entry by the same author in her unpublished PhD thesis from 1964, Zotović 1964: num. 8.

[270] The marble statue from Kostolac (Viminacium), now in National museum Požarevac (inv. num. 2489) is modelled from white-grey marble, height 26cm.

Statue of god Serapis from Viminacium
(photo-documentation: National Museum Požarevac)

by several elements: the iconography of the statue (throne, dress, posture) and the detail of the himation thrown over the left shoulder. However, the animal which is flanking the throne on the Viminacium statue is not the usual Serapis companion, Cerberus, which could have prevented previous authors from making an accurate identification of the deity, but a gryphon (clearly indicated by the elongated head of the animal, akin to an eagle's head). The gryphon is Serapis' animal companion on other known monuments, such as two marble reliefs from Rhodus, a marble ex-voto from Andriace in Lycia and a marble relief from Pompei.[271] The closest analogies to Viminacium's statuary presentation of the god Serapis can be found in a marble statue of Serapis in Cambridge (Corpus Christi College), dated to the 2nd century and a marble statue of the god from Naples.[272]

A bronze appliqué in the shape of Magna Mater's bust with a mural crown was found in the locality of Ravna (Timacum Minus) and represents a solid local work (cat. 8). The goddess's hair is divided in the middle and covered with the mural crown, while she is dressed in a chiton with a himation over it (a part of the himation can be seen on her left shoulder). The mural crown on the goddess's head does not represent the type with city walls with dentated apexes, but the type resembling a city fortification of a square basis with four towers, one on each corner of the crown.[273] This type of mural crown indicates not only the goddess's dimension as

[271] Both marble reliefs from Rhodes (now in British Museum) present Serapis in the company of Isis, who is standing before a god. The gryphon is presented beside the throne. On the marble relief from Andriace, Serapis is standing next to another deity (Tyche perhaps?), while gryphon is presented with Hades, ladder, serpent, buckler. Marble relief from Pompeii shows naked Serapis with himation holding knotted sceptre, with gryphon beside the throne, Kater Sibbes 1973: 61, num. 360-361, 72, num. 416 and 93, num. 507.

[272] The presentations of enthroned Serapis actually copy the statue of the god which was situated in his temple, Sarapeum, in Alexandria. Serapis is shown as a mature, bearded man seating on the throne, with high crown *calathos* on his head. He is usually dressed in long chiton, with himation over his shoulder or back, holding a sceptre in his left hand, while his right hand is usually resting on Cerberus' head who sits on the right side of the throne, *LIMC* VII.1, 689-690, num. 8a and 9, fig. 8a and 9.

[273] The attribute of the mural crown or *corona muralis* is a characteristic attribute for the goddesses protectresses in Hittite, later Assyrian and Persian iconography. In Greek art, the motif of mural crown appears in the Hellenistic period, the earliest objects on which Magna Mater is presented with this headdress being two terracottas from Pergamon, Roller 1999: 145, ft.6. Already during the first half of the 4th century BC, goddess Tyche but also other goddesses who were respected as the protectresses of the Greek cities, appear with the mural crown. In the second half of the 4th century BC, on Apulian vases the personification of Asia is shown with *corona muralis* as the obligatory attribute, Metzler 1994: 76-85.

the protectress of the city and city walls, but also as a goddess of Nature and the harvest.[274] In that context, the Magna Mater carries the epithet *turrigera* or *turrita* (in Greek religion *πυργοφρος*), under which she is mentioned by several ancient writers.[275] However, what makes the identification of the bronze appliqué from Ravna uncertain is the fact that the attribute of *corona muralis* is not only typical in Magna Mater's imagery, but is also known in the iconography of other goddesses like Tyche, Artemis from Ephesus, Ceres, etc. The personifications of the cities or provinces were presented in the same iconographic way. The closest iconographic analogy is found in the appliqué of the goddess with a mural crown, probably from Salona, but also in the bronze bust of Cybele from Tours-en-Vimeu.[276] Other similarities can be observed in an appliqué from Besançon and in an appliqué of unknown provenience from northern France.[277] Judging by the features of the goddess's face and her clothes, the appliqué is dated to the 2nd or the 3rd century.

A silver plate from the Tekija hoard represents a very interesting object in the context of the Magna Mater's cult, not only on the Central Balkans territory, but also in a wider sense regarding the complex iconography of the goddess and her possible syncretism with other goddesses (cat. 9). In the hoard discovered in the village of Tekija (Transdierna) on the lower Danube, a group of gold and silver objects comprising silver coins, silver and gold jewellery, silver vessels and silver plates with representations of different deities, was found.[278] The name of the probable owner of the Tekija hoard is presented on a silver buckle and it is a Roman soldier, Gaius Valerius Cresces, from the centuria Veri.[279] Since the locality of Tekija is on the Danube Limes, it has been presumed that the hoard was deliberately hidden as a result of some impending danger or that it was looted by Roman soldiers. For a more accurate understanding of the iconographic content and symbolism of the Tekija plate with Magna Mater's representation, it is important to briefly resume the previous analyses and interpretations by different scholars. Đorđe Mano-Zisi was the first scholar who suggested that the goddess on the Tekija silver plate is Magna Mater syncretised with the goddess Demeter and that the plate corresponds to another silver plate from the Tekija hoard on which the god Sabazius (with certain elements from Asclepius' iconography) is presented.[280] M. Macrea did not agree and offered an opinion regarding representations of Nantusvelta and Dis Pater on Tekija silver plates.[281] Ch. Picard agreed with Mano-Zisi and concluded, after thorough analysis, that on the two silver plates the deities Magna Mater and Sabazius are represented.[282] A similar opinion is given by E. N. Lane.[283] The last scholar to tackle the question of the identity of the goddess from the Tekija hoard's silver plate was A. Jovanović, who expressed a completely different attitude towards the plate's iconography and implied that the goddess in question is probably Persephone, while the god on the corresponding plate would be Hercules. In the context of this short review of thus-far existing interpretations of the silver plates from Tekija, it is quite clear that both plates carry a quite complex iconography that can be interpreted in a variety of ways.

The representation on the silver plate from the Tekija hoard shows an *aedicula* decorated with vegetative ornaments and rosettes, inside which is a standing female figure. The goddess is dressed in a chiton with a himation; she wears a mural crown on her head, while her wavy hair is gathered under the crown. The goddess holds the himation with one hand, while in her other hand a patera is presented, from which a snake is eating. Behind the goddess is a plant with large leaves and a flower on the top. Near the goddess's head, on both sides, there is a hole with gold wire, which served for fixing the plate on the clothes of the priest or devotee. The attributes of the mural crown and patera imply the identification of the goddess as Magna Mater. The puzzling detail in the whole scene is the feeding snake, which is rarely seen in Magna Mater iconography (except on a relief from Tomis).[284] A

[274] Cambi 1971: 57.

[275] For example, Lucretius in 'De rerum natura' writes that *corona muralis* on Magna Mater's head, recalls the mountain sites of fortified towns. Varro and Cornutus also relate the crown to citadels, Jope: 1985, 253. Ovid describes that Magna Mater has a turreted crown on her head 'because she gave towers to the first cities', Ovid *Fasti* IV 215. Vergil writes that Cybele 'crowned with turrets, rides through the Phrygian cities delighting in her divine children, clasping a hundred descendants, all gods, all dwelling in the heights above,' Vergil *Aeneid* 6.785.

[276] Cambi 1971: 55. The bronze bust of Cybele discovered near Tours-en-Vimeu (now in the Cabinet of Medals, cat. num. 1754) presents the goddess very similarly to the Ravna applique – with a type of *corona muralis* in the shape of the city fortification of a square basis with four towers on every corner and with two cornucopiae, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cybele_bronze_CdM.jpg

[277] On the bronze applique from Besançon, the bust of the goddess with mural crown is presented, while on the applique of unknown provenience, the bust of Magna Mater is shown with the a mural crown and a necklace. On both sides of the goddess's bust, lion figures are presented, while under the Magna Mater's bust, there is the bust of the god Attis, *CCCA* V, 142-143, num. 410, 467.

[278] A group of different golden and silver objects was found in 1948. year in village Tekija. One part of the objects was of Italic origin, one part belonged to local Moesian material culture, while the six silver plates with representations of different deities (Magna Mater, Sabazius, Jupiter, Hermes, Fortuna-Tyche or Nemesis, Selena) belong to Hellenistic Oriental circle, Mano-Zisi 1957: 46-52.

[279] Unfortunately, we don't know to which legion of cohort centuria Veri belonged, Ibid: 20-21.

[280] Ibid: 33-39, num. 34-35, T. XXIII, XXIV.

[281] Macrea 1959: 15, f. 50.

[282] Picard 1961: 161.

[283] E. N. Lane also contemplates about identification with the goddess Demeter, Lane 1985: 45, D2.

[284] The relief from the locality Tomis, today in a private collection in London, shows Magna Mater enthroned, wearing a polos on her head, dressed in long chiton with himation. Her right hand rests on tympanum and in it, the goddess holds a patera, while in her left hand is a phiale from which a snake drinks. On the left side of the goddess, a man on a horse holds a labrys. The relief is dated to the 2nd or the 3rd

very close analogy is also known from the votive relief in the Louvre, dated to Late Antiquity, where Magna Mater holds a phiale, from which a snake drinks.[285] The snake is, however, quite frequently presented with the goddess Demeter, whose association with Magna Mater has already been discussed, with the snake presented only with Magna Mater or with both goddesses, as in representations from two altars found in Chalandri (Phlya).[286] Beside the snake, another motif indicates the syncretistic representation of Magna Mater and Demeter on the Tekija plate, a plant shown behind the goddess. Representations of Magna Mater with similar plants are known,[287]and a flower on the plant's top, which would be a poppy, additionally strengthens the hypothesis of Magna Mater and Demeter syncretism, since Demeter is often shown with poppy flowers.[288] With these remarks, I would suggest that the goddess presented on the Tekija silver plate is either Magna Mater or a syncretistic image of Magna Mater and Demeter. The deity on the other silver plate, also found in Tekija's hoard, is most probably the god Sabazius and the corresponding representations of these two deities would be something quite expected, bearing in mind their iconographic association, which dates from the Hellenistic period from Asia Minor centres. In Roman times, Magna Mater and Sabazius are mentioned together on epigraphic monuments and presented on monuments from different Roman provinces.[289] In light of this fact, the identification of the goddess on the silver plate from Tekija, dated to the second half of the 1st century, as Magna Mater would be completely justified.[290]

Very interesting representations of Magna Mater are known from two gems, unfortunately of unknown provenience. On both gems, the goddess is presented frontally, but in completely different scenes - on the first gem she holds her dress, while on her left and right side there are lions, with their heads turned towards the goddess (cat. 10). This iconographical type of Magna Mater presentation existed in Greek sculpture from the 4th century BC.[291] The gem is made from red jasper, a colour characteristic of the goddess.

The second gem represents Magna Mater riding on a lion's back (cat. 11).[292] The goddess holds a sceptre and cornucopia or tympanum in her hands. This iconographic type of Magna Mater representation was inspired by the painting of Nicomachus, a painter of the Thebano-Attic school, who worked in the middle of the 4th century BC.[293] Iconographic analogies are found in three gems held at the British Museum.[294] Both gems are dated to the 2nd or 3rd century.

As for the temples or shrines of Magna Mater in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans, a goddess' shrine can be assumed to have existed in Viminacium, because Gaius Valerius Vibianus, nautarum quinquennalis, who restored the temple of god Neptune, also gives as a present a statue of the goddess, presumably to be placed in her temple or at

century, Metropoulou 1996: 142, n. K14. I would also like to mention a relief from Bucarest, with Magna Mater enthroned, wearing a *corona muralis* on her head, holding a phiale in her right hand and a tympanum in her left hand. The goddess's throne is flanked with two lions and beside the throne there is a rectangular altar, with a tree behind it, around which is an entwined snake. The snake drinks from a phiale which is held by a man on a horse. Beside the horse, a dog is presented, Ibid: 142, num. K12.

[285] *CCCA* I, 36, num. 104.

[286] Two marble altars found in the locality Chalandri (Phlya), now in National Museum in Athens (inv. num. 1746 and 1747), contain iconographic presentations on all three sides (lateral sides and backside), while the inscriptions are presented on the front side. On backsides of both altars, two crossed and burning torches with ribbons are shown, with a tympanum and a pedum between them below and an urceus and a patera above them. There is a pine tree presented too. On the left side of both altars, Cybele is shown under two pine trees, sitting on the throne flanked with two lions, putting her hand on Attis who stands next to her. The goddess is presented with mural crown and tympanum, while Attis holds a pedum. Similar scenes are shown on the right side of both altars – Cybele and Demeter enthroned sit next to each other, Cybele wearing the mural crown, holding patera and tympanum, while Demeter holds a little bunch of corn-ears and a torch entwined by a snake. The young man is standing next to Demeter (Hermes or Iacchus in M. J. Vermaseren's opinion), while next to Cybele stands Kore with two torches turned down. Both altars are dated around 387, *CCCA* II, 116-118, num. 389-390.

[287] On the bronze diadem found in Rome, two scenes inside the temples are presented: inside the first temple god Sabazius surrounded with different symbols is shown, while inside the second temple, Magna Mater on the throne, with mural crown and the poppy in her right hand, is presented, *CCCA* III, 82, num. 304.

[288] Mano-Zisi 1957, 34.

[289] Of two epigraphic monuments dedicated to Magna Mater and Sabazius, on the first one the goddess's name is Θεα Ιδεία (votive altar from Nicopolis), Lane 1985, 7, num. 16, while on the second monument found in Rome, the goddess is called *Caelestis,* Ibid: 28, num. 60. In the context of iconographic presentations, among the most interesting I count two gilded bronze plates from Rome, Ibid: 39, num. 81. In the centre of both plates, Magna Mater enthroned is presented, wearing a mural crown and holding a poppy in her right hand. Gods Attis and Hermes are shown behind her, and on her left side, god Sabazius is presented, *CCIS* III: 16-17.

[290] Đ. Mano-Zisi dates Tekija hoard to the period between 83-86 or in 89, Mano-Zisi 1957: 46.

[291] Simon 1997: 764.

[292] Antique presentations of Magna Mater riding a lion originated from Asia Minor iconography of Hittite goddesses, who were as the mistresses of the lions, shown on the animals' back, Thompson, Thompson 1987: 430. In Hellenistic art, the model for this iconographic type was the statue of Magna Mater riding a lion from the Pergamon altar. Here, however, the opinion of E. Simon must be mentioned. She thinks that no matter how popular Magna Mater was, the presentation of a female goddess who rides a lion on the Pergamon altar, isn't Phrygian goddess, but Greek goddess Rhea, Roller 1999: 209. This iconographic image of Magna Mater was often shown on Roman coins, as for example on bronze medallions of empress Faustina, Turcan 1983: 27 and further.

[293] On the account of Pliny the Elder, Nicomachus was the son and disciple of Aristiaeus, very talented painter, who beside the painting of Mother of the Gods riding a lion, painted other works like rape of Proserpina, a Victory soaring aloft in a chariot, Ulisses wearing the pileus, Apollo and Diana, Bacchantes with Satyrs and a Scylla. Pliny states that Nicomachus was a very fast and successful artist, Pliny, *Natural History* XXXV 108.

[294] Smith 1888: 145, num. 1228-1230. The same iconographic presentation is known from the medallions from Rome, but also Commodus' coins from 191-192, Simon 1997: 761, num. 100-101.

Tetrastyle prostylos from Felix Romuliana
(Čanak-Medić, Stojković-Pavelka 2011: 77, fig. 42)

least, in her shrine. However, so far, no archaeological confirmation of Magna Mater's temple in Viminacium has been found.

Another temple of the goddess can be perhaps recognised in a so-called small temple in the locality of Felix Romuliana, Gamzigrad, near Zaječar. The imperial complex at Gamzigrad was founded by Galerius, who was born and buried there.[295] Gamzigrad presents one of the most extensive and most representative palatial-residential complexes of Late Antiquity, similar to Diocletian's palace in Split, the architectural ideology of which it followed. Diocletian had three main goals when he established the short term system of the tetrarchy – to enlarge the Roman army, to reform the central ruling system in the state and to deify the Roman emperor. The last goal is particularly visible in the architecture from the tetrarchy period, and can be clearly observed in the architecture of Felix Romuliana. Galerius, an emperor of modest origins from peasant parents, came prominence in 293, when he was adopted by Diocletian and, thus, became a member of Jupiter's family, the son of a god. This event is particularly mirrored in Felix Romuliana's iconography, where the three main deities are Jupiter, Hercules and Dionysus, the two last gods being models for Galerius, because their fathers were also gods and mothers were mortals - just as was the case with Galerius, who proclaimed that his father was the god Jupiter and his mother Romula was a mortal.[296] The building of Gamzigrad could have started probably only after Galerius' victory over Sarmatians, Quadi and Bastarnae on the Danube, in 297.

D. Srejović noticed that every building built in Felix Romuliana (fortifications, temples, palaces and public buildings, as well as the decoration) corresponded not only with the ideology of the tetrarchy, but also with Galerius' private and political biography. Different authors have debated the chronology of two temples built in Felix Romuliana, the so-called large temple, which was placed in the centre of the locality (where the cults of the gods Jupiter and Hercules, together with the cult of the emperor Galerius, were honoured) and the so-called small temple, which was dedicated to a mountain deity or mountain deities, which were, according to Lactantius, venerated by Galerius' mother Romula.[297] Of course, by mountain deities, Lactantius did not have to think only of the goddess Magna Mater, other deities could have been worshipped by Romula as well, but particular architectural and archaeological details discovered in the small temple supported researchers' hypotheses that, Lactantius meant the Phrygian goddess under the term of mountain deities. The small temple was thought to have been constructed in parallel with the original fortification at Felix Romuliana, that is before the later fortification, palace and large temple in the centre of the locality. The two temples occupied the most important positions in Felix Romuliana – as already mentioned, the large temple, in the form of a peripteros, was built in the very centre of the locality, while the small temple or tetrastyle

[295] The emperor Galerius was born in a small place, not far from Serdica, in province Dacia Ripensis and he re-named his birthplace, calling it after his mother Romula – Romulianum, *Epitome de Caesaribus,* 40.16.

[296] Galerius' close relationship with gods Hercules and Dionysus is not only present in Felix Romuliana, but also in his capital Thessalonike, in the sacrifice scene on Galerius' arch and on the so-called small arch above the entrance into the octagon of the palace, Srejović 2011: 164.

[297] Beside criticising Galerius that he was a barbarian and of savage looks and behaviour, Lactantius also described that emperor's mother, Romula, was an exceedingly superstitious woman, worshipping the gods of the mountains. In Lactantius words, she sacrificed almost every day, feasted her servants on the meat offered to the gods and was strongly against Christianity, Lactantius, *De mortibus Persecutorum,* XI.

prostylos, was located between two palaces (palace D1 and palace D3).[298] The temple was oriented in an east-west direction, with the entrance facing east, and had dimensions of 10.45x16.57 m. On the frontal side, a spacious staircase brought the visitors to a cella of an almost square plan, similar to the temple of Jupiter in Diocletian's palace in Split.[299] However, two details distinguish Felix Romuliana's small temple from Jupiter's temple in Split – a monumental altar, which was placed in the open and a crypt of a cruciform plan with a basin below the adyton (niche) of the cella.[300] In the niche, a receptacle of marble slabs was discovered, however no traces of the stairs for descending into the crypt were found, which does not have to mean anything since the stairs could have been made of wood and used only on special occasions for descending into the crypt.[301] As D. Srejović describes, the finished surfaces of the crypt walls and the careful planning and the execution of the crypt suggest that the space was designed for some particular religious purpose. The structure of the crypt is very similar to the structure discovered at the locality of Neuss-Gnadental (Novaesium), to which one could enter by two narrow sets of stairs (one opposite the other at the southern and the northern ends of the chapel), which made the scholars who analysed it identify the structure as a *fossa sanguinis*, described by Prudentius for performing the taurobolium in the 4th century. However, the function of the crypt at Neuss-Gnadental as a *fossa sanguinis* is very doubtful, since the only temples constructed at the locality were dedicated to the god Jupiter and Matronae – there is no temple of Magna Mater.[302] A similar subterranean chamber identified as a *fossa sanguinis* was discovered in the tower of the Sullan wall to the south of Bellona's temple in Ostia. In a recent study, A.-K. Rieger showed that the chamber was actually used as a cistern to fill the various basins that existed in the vicinity of Magna Mater's temple and not a *fossa sanguinis,* as presumed.[303] Since we cannot even be sure whether the taurobolium included the ritus which, by Prudentius' words, was performed in the so-called *fossa sanguinis* or the description was the author's exaggeration[304] and since no subterranean construction has yet been identified as a *fossa sanguinis*, I will refrain from further discussion about the function of the crypt in the small temple in Felix Romuliana. Thus far, there is no archaeological evidence to support its identification as a *fossa sanguinis* nor is there epigraphic evidence that the temple was dedicated to Magna Mater. Nevertheless, the function of the crypt in the small temple in Felix Romuliana as a sacred space cannot be disputed, likewise the function of the crypt under the cella of the large temple in the locality, which was supposed to be dedicated to some chthonic deity or supposedly served for the performing of the mystical rites of Magna Mater or the god Mithras.[305] Here, an interesting paper by D. Mladenović should be mentioned, where the sacred space in Felix Romuliana is connected with the god Mithras – the author offers the hypothesis about Romula's mausoleum at Gamzigrad being intentionally oriented towards the rising of Orion (seen as the god Mithras), on the eve of the winter solstice, because through the mediation of her son Galerius (whose dedications to the god are attested), Romula's soul would be put on the path of salvation and eternal life.[306] While D. Mladenović came to the mentioned conclusion through the analysis of the mausoleum's orientation and celestial orientation, D. Srejović associated the large temple's crypt with the cults of Magna Mater and/or the god Mithras on the basis of three fragmented marble sculptures, one female and two male, which represented arms holding a torch found in the temple's area.[307] The iconographic features of the fragmented sculptures clearly imply torch-bearers, who are part of Magna Mater's and Mithras' imagery. Whatever the functions of both crypts in the two temples in Felix Romuliana were, whether they were related to the cult of Magna Mater in some way or not, it is important to emphasise that all buildings in Felix Romuliana mirrored Galerius' personal and ideological programme, which was completely in the service of the tetrarchy and of Galerius' imperial apotheosis with the final goal of establishing the cult of Divus Galerius.[308] In that context, the cult of Magna Mater would suit perfectly the emperor's ideological and personal wishes, which unfortunately he did not succeed in achieving, nor did he see the planned

[298] The small temple was situated between Felix Romuliana north-western section and south-eastern section, Čanak-Medić, Stojković-Pavelka 2011: 77.

[299] Srejović, Lalović, Janković 1979: 54.

[300] Beside the crypt was a small rectangular vaulted niche with the bottom under the crypt floor.

[301] Čanak-Medić, Stojković-Pavelka 2011: 77.

[302] The crypt discovered at the locality Neuss-Gnadental was most probably inside or near some sacred area and had a sacred purpose, however no arguments to connect it with the cult of Magna Mater and the ritual of taurobolium, exist, Alvar 2008: 264.

[303] A.-K. Rieger dates the room in the late 1st century, which is an early period for the description of *fossa sanguinis* offered by Prudentius, Rieger 2004: 110-112.

[304] N. McLynn doubts the possibility that the ritual described by Prudentius as the fourth century taurobolium, performed in *fossa sanguinis* actually existed and that it was perhaps a the fruit of the writer's imagination, McLynn 1996: 312-330.

[305] Čanak-Medić, Stojković-Pavelka 2011: 85; Srejović, Lalović, Janković 1979: 58-59.

[306] D. Mladenovic offers the hypothesis that both, Romula's mausoleum in Felix Romuliana and mausoleum of Maximinus Daia's mother in Šarkamen, were oriented identically and that their orientation matches the azimuth of Orion's rise at Felix Romuliana and Šarkamen on the 21st December, the day of the winter solstice. The author further connects the rising of Orion perceived as god Mithras, with the dedications to the god made by Galerius and other tetrarchs and thus, she thinks that as believers of Mithras, both Galerius and Maximinus Daia buried their mothers in the mausolea oriented toward the god, who offered the hope for the salvation of the souls of the deceased, that is, for their mothers, Mladenović 2009: 81-97.

[307] Srejović, Lalović, Janković 1979: 58-59.

[308] Srejović 2011: 163.

completion of Felix Romuliana, dying one year before the *vicennial celebrations* of his reign.[309]

1.3. The Cult of Cybele / Magna Mater in the Central Balkans

Although no concrete or thoroughly documented, analysed and interpreted studies about the cult of Magna Mater in the Roman Central Balkans were written in the past, it has been assumed in the earlier literature that the goddess's cult was less favoured than it actually was during Antiquity.[310] Of eleven cult monuments, eight monuments certainly present Magna Mater, while the remaining three monuments probably show either the goddess or her priestess. The location of Magna Mater's monuments showed their concentration mostly in the eastern and southern parts of the Central Balkan Roman provinces, while in the western parts of the territory no monuments of the goddess have been discovered. However, as we shall see later, it is possible that here, in one part of the area of the former eastern province of Dalmatia, the cult of Magna Mater was somewhat substituted with the cult of her paredros – the god Attis, since we are dealing with numerous funerary monuments originating from different localities situated in western parts of Central Balkans, with figures of *Attis tristis* presented on their lateral sides. The geographical location of Magna Mater's monuments does not imply consecutiveness in the context that the goddess's cult is attested only in big urban centres or military camps or smaller rural centres. On the contrary, the locations where Magna Mater's monuments were found encompass urban cities like Ratiaria and Viminacium, fortifications like Karataš (Diana) and Ravna (Timacum Minus), but also imperial residential complexes like Mediana in Niš and Felix Romuliana near Zaječar. Certain localities, like Viminacium, being the capital of Moesia Superior, were more important centres of the Metroac cult, because beside Magna Mater's cult, funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image were also attested. Although not numerous, as in other Roman provinces like Dalmatia, Central Balkan epigraphic and archaeological monuments of Magna Mater indicate under which aspects the goddess was venerated, in which ways, who could have been her devotees and whether her sanctuaries existed in the territory.

The analysis of two votive altars, from Ratiaria and Viminacium, dedicated to Magna Mater, showed that on both monuments the goddess is referred to as *Mater Deum.* The only difference exists in the epithet *Augusta,* present on the votive altar from Ratiaria. As I have already mentioned, this epithet is quite rarely attributed to the goddess, and the dedicants of the monuments erected to Magna Mater Augusta are mostly soldiers, members of their families or members of the goddess's cult personnel (*dendrophori*). The other votive altar discovered in Viminacium offers more information about her dedicant and the reason for erecting the monument. Gaius Valerius Vibianus was involved with river trade or river transport and he restored the temple of the god Neptune, but also gave a gift of a statue of Magna Mater, at his own expense. He was a *nautarum quinquennalis*, a member of the *collegium nautarum* and was probably responsible for the provisioning of the Roman army. *Nautae* could be soldiers or members of the army personnel, but also imperial slaves.[311] Therefore, from the Viminacium inscription we find out that Vibianus was a quinquennalis – president of the *collegium nautarum* selected for a five year period, who was in charge of various activities of the collegium and was financially secure, given he could afford to give 2,000 sestertii for the restoration of Neptune's temple and to donate a statue of Magna Mater. The fact that Neptune's temple definitely existed in Viminacium is attested with a fragmented inscription found in the locality, but of a later date (the inscription is dated between 284 and 305). The dedication to Neptune Conservator was made by Legion VII Claudia.[312] Also near Kostolac, Viminacium, in the locality of Kličevac, *the base of a* statue of a presumed personification of the goddess Annona equated with Ceres, was found, with a dedication to two Caesars by *quinquennalis collegii nautarum*.[313] The port in Viminacium is also indirectly confirmed with the inscription on a fragmented votive icon of the god Mithras, discovered in the village of Drmno near Kostolac, dedicated to the god by a *nauclerus*.[314]

An interesting detail on the Viminacium votive monument presents a figure of a dolphin, which here could symbolise the god Neptune, but it could also represent an association with the goddess. From the very arrival of Magna Mater to Rome, the goddess was venerated as the protectress of sailors and the one

[309] Galerius planned to mark his *vicennalia* by completing the building of Felix Romuliana, Ibid.

[310] Зотовић 1969: 59-60.

[311] *Nautae* were boatmen and involved in river transport, while *navicularii* were sea-going sailors and involved in maritime transport. *Nautae* were actually responsible for transporting goods from one point to the other, or from one river to another, Berchem 1937: 143-144.

[312] *AE* 1901, 11; *CIL* III, 14506; *IMS* II, num. 38.

[313] *AE* 1971, 421; *IMS* II, num. 49.

[314] *IMS* II, num. 31. However, it seems that the port in Viminacium wasn't the main one, contrary to the port which existed in Margum, *Notitia Dignitatum,* Or. XLI 38. Other ports in Central Balkans' territory are attested in Margum, Egeta and Ratiaria, like the presence of a fleet in Singidunum in the 6th century, Mirković 1968: 35.

who is 'ruling the sea',[315] and rivers.[316] In light of the fact that on the Viminacium monument, Magna Mater was probably venerated as the goddess who offered protection to Vibianus in his business related to the river and river transportation, there is a link with the god Neptune too, because Vibianus was assuring the protection of both deities for himself and his business. Where could Magna Mater's statue have been situated? Could it have been placed in the temple of Neptune or was it situated in her own private sanctuary?[317] If we are to follow J. Medini's hypothesis about the private temples of Magna Mater in the province of Dalmatia, whether they were called *aedes, templum* or *fanum,* they were smaller modest buildings, most frequently with a triangular pediment, architrave, trabeation and perhaps with some columns or without columns with antae.[318] Can we presume this or a similar appearance of the temple of Magna Mater in Viminacium?

Marble sculptures and statues of Magna Mater known in Roman Central Balkan localities generally represent the same canonical image of the goddess, known from other Roman provinces as well. If we reserve judgement about the two statues from Mediana and Karataš, where the first statue most probably presents Magna Mater and the other statue shows the goddess or her priestess, the four remaining statuary monuments present Magna Mater sitting on a throne flanked by two lions. This most frequent iconographic type of goddess representation found fertile ground in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans, but possessing certain Hellenistic undertones.

On a relief from Stobi and a fragmented statue of unknown provenience, certain iconographic elements characteristic of Greek, that is to say Hellenistic, influence are present. Magna Mater's monument from Stobi shows the goddess inside an *aedicula*, while the statue of unknown provenience displays the iconographic type of Magna Mater-Demeter-Hera. The equitation of Cybele / Magna Mater with Demeter is attested in Antiquity by ancient writers, on epigraphic and archaeological monuments.[319] The more Hellenised iconography of the goddess in the southern parts of the Central Balkans is not surprising, since the Greek and Hellenistic cultural and artistic influences remained during the whole period of Roman reign, which is most obvious if we take a look at known representations of Magna Mater from the province of Macedonia. The most transparent examples are a relief from the locality of Marvinci and a votive monument with two Mothers Goddesses inside a two-part *aedicule,* discovered in Marvinci.[320] The first monument from Marvinci presents Magna Mater with a veil, holding a patera and tympanum in her hands, sitting on a throne on one side of which a standing female figure is shown, while on the other side of the throne a male figure is presented. The monument shows a somewhat reduced iconographic type of Magna Mater's representation with Hecate and Hermes, where the reduction is implied by the missing attributes from Hecate's hands (torch) and Hermes's hands (vessel).[321] This type of presentation is attested during the Classical and Hellenistic period in Greece[322], and even in the Roman period it is frequently presented in Greek centres.[323] The second votive monument from Marvinci is in the shape of two *aediculae* separated by columns, where in each partition a throned goddess is presented, wearing a polos on her head. Both statues have the same posture, clothes and crowns – the differences are presented only in the details (the attribute of the tympanum in the left hand of the goddess on the right side and a small lion in her lap, contrary to the goddess on the left side, on whose right

[315] Vermaseren 1977: 143. The figures of dolphin are rarely shown on Metroac presentations – one of them is known from the relief discovered in the locality Potaissa in Dacia, where Magna Mater is shown with god Attis, behind whom a figure of dolphin is pictured, Johnston 1996: 110. Also, the figure of dolphin can be seen on the left lateral side of the votive monument of Servillia Copiesilla from Salona, dated to the 1st-2nd century, Medini 1981: 518, num. 40.

[316] Well known monument of Claudia Syntyche dedicated to Magna Mater and Navisalvia, addresses the function of Magna Mater as the river protectress, Leach 2007: 1-16; Vilogorac-Brčić 2012: 373-379.

[317] The private temples of Magna Mater were more numerous than the public sanctuaries of the goddess and their character is determined by the fact that they were built and restored with the private finances. Beside the information about the building, restoration or decoration of the temple, data on the statues, altars and cult utensils, are often mentioned.

[318] J. Medini analysing the remains and data about the possible Magna Mater's sanctuaries on the territory of Salona, notices that it isn't possible to distinguish the reason for different naming of the sanctuaries (*aedes, templum, fanum*) – whether it was because of the different ground plans of the sanctuaries or because of some other reason, it can't be said with certainty, Medini 1981: 185-188.

[319] Julian compares Demeter's priestess Callixena for her loyalty to the goddess with Penelope and writes that because of her virtues and dedication, Callixena deserved her position as the priestess in goddess's temple in Pessinus, Graillot 1912: 408. In Aphrodisias, cults of both goddesses were honoured, Ibid: 363. Representations of Magna Mater and Demeter together are known from Thassos and Lebadeia, Vermaseren 1977: 80. For more details about the connection between Demeter and Cybele / Magna Mater, see Sfameni Gasparro 1978: 1148-1187.

[320] For the relief of Goddess mother from Marvinci see Соколовска 1988: 117, num. 3, fig. 3 and Битракова-Грозданова 1987: 125, T. V.2. For the votive monument with the presentation of two goddesses inside the two-parted aedicula from Marvinci, see Seure 1922: I, 271, num. 7, fig. 8; Zotović 1964: 276, num. 14; Düll 1977: 415, num. 280, abb. 69; *CCCA* VI : 92, num. 314.

[321] M. J. Vermaseren interprets this iconographic type of Magna Mater's presentation as the goddess with Hecate and Hermes, Vermaseren 1977: 35. However, M. J. Vermaseren mentions different opinions, like the one of A. Conze by which the male figure presents the servant, while J. M. Svoronos presumes that the female figure is goddess Persephone, while the male figure is actually Troptolemos, Ibid: 79.

[322] This type of presentation is known from Athene's Agora where the monument dated to the 5th century BC was found and from the silver relief from Eretria, *CCCA* II, 21, num. 45 and 122, num. 402. To these monuments, a marble votive relief found in Piraeus, now in Berlin's Pergamon Museum and dated to the second half of the 4th century BC, should be added, Vermaseren 1977: 35.

[323] Like the relief from Thassos, dated to the 2nd century AD, dedicated to the goddess by her priestess or the relief from Lebadeia, Ibid: 80.

side a sitting lion is presented). Similar presentations of Cybele/Magna Mater are known from Attica, where usually one goddess holds a sceptre and a phiale, while the other goddess is presented with a tympanum instead of a sceptre.[324] In her analysis of Greek monuments of this iconographic type, F. Naumann reports that from 18 monuments presenting two goddesses inside a two-part *aedicula*, 11 monuments were found in Attica, while the other monuments were discovered on Delos, Corinth, in Delphi, etc.[325] Different scholars have discussed the problematics of this iconographic type of Cybele/Magna Mater, questioning whether a mother and daughter are shown (like in the case of Demeter and Kore)[326] or is the double aspect of Magna Mater's cult in question (as it is in the presentations of Athene Polias and Athene Parthenos). Or perhaps the image of the Mother of the Gods is duplicated, to emphasise the power of the goddess' cult?[327] Most scholars agree with the presumption that one statue represents the Magna Mater's cult in the Athenian Agora, while the other statue represents the goddess' cult in the Metroon in Pireus,[328] that is that in the two statues of the goddess, two different aspects of Cybele/Magna Mater are reconciled – the Phrygian aspect and the Greek aspect of her cult.[329] The inscription from Piraeus, dated to the 4th century BC, indicates the previously stated point, because it mentions Mother and Mother of the Gods, with the obvious implication that it is dedicated only to one and the same deity.[330] However, the cult of Demeter was favoured in the Central Balkans territory and the statuary representation from Marvinci could be another testimony of the 'introduction' of the new cult of Magna Mater into a foreign environment, by associating it with a familiar cult of a favoured deity like Demeter. Whatever the interpretation might be, I believe that the statue from Marvinci illustrates well V. Bitrakova-Grozdanova's opinion about the prominent Greek influence on Magna Mater's cult attested in today's Macedonia, which came from two directions: the shores of Asia Minor and Thrace.[331] This influence spread to the southern parts of Moesia Superior during Antiquity, which explains the obvious Hellenistic religious, cultural and artistic influences in the iconography of Magna Mater's monuments originating from there.

The marble female head from Karataš, with a diadem and a veil, represents an interesting monument, in the context of the possibility that instead of Magna Mater, who was frequently presented with a veil (from her earliest days in Rome attested on the votive monument of her priestess Claudia Syntyche),[332] the goddess' priestess is presented. The fresco from Pompeii offers an insight into what Magna Mater's priestess looked like during the sacrificial procession - dressed in a white dress with a tympanum in her raised left hand, while the other priestesses held olive branches, cymbals, etc.[333] Magna Mater's priestesses are known from preserved monuments, reliefs and statues, such as the marble relief from the Vatican Museum representing the *sacerdos maxima* Laberia Felicia[334] and the statue of Plancia Magna from Pergamon.[335] Although on the

[324] Borgeaud 2004: 24.

[325] Naumann 1983: 188-190.

[326] Lj. Zotović is the first to mention that S. Reinach thought that double presentations of the goddess show Demeter and Kore, while G. Seure presumed that duplicated image of Mother Goddess is shown in this type of presentations, Zotović 1964: 276-278.

[327] Borgeaud 2004: 24. M. J. Vermaseren assumes that double presentations of the goddess are the images of Demeter and Mother Goddess, Vermaseren 1977: 36.

[328] On the behalf of J. M. Svoronos opinion, F. Naumann also argues that double presentations of the goddess present double aspect of Cybele/Magna Mater and as the argument for her opinion she mentions the inscription from the relief with a double presentation of the goddess from Isthmia, which is dedicated only to one goddess *Meter theon Ourania*, Naumann 1983: 189.

[329] Analysing double presentations of goddess mother from Athens, J. M. Svoronos noticed that one goddess generally holds a sceptre (usual attribute on goddess's presentation from Greece), while the other goddess holds a tympanum (usual attribute for the goddess's presentations from Greek cities in Anatolia), which led him to the presumption that one goddess presents one Greek aspect of the Mother goddess, while the other goddess symbolizes the other aspect of the goddess – Asian one, Naumann 1983: 189-190. J. M. Svoronos thought that the Greek aspect of the goddess was represented by her statue in the Metroon in Agora, while her Asian aspect was presented by her statue in the Metroon in Piraeus. P. Borgeaud observes that in the earliest period of the goddess's honouring in Greece, she was worshipped in the Phrygian communities in Piraeus, and only later, with the goddess's Hellenisation, her cult became important in other big centres in Greece, Boardman 2004: 25.

[330] Ibid: 23.

[331] Битракова-Грозданова 1999: 139.

[332] *CIL* VI, 492. The well-known altar with a representation of the legend about Claudia Quinta's miracle, was found at the place of ancient emporium, on the Tiber bank. On the front side of the altar, Claudia Quinta is shown in relief, pulling a rope bound to the ship in which Magna Mater's veiled enthroned statue is presented. Claudia Quinta is shown trying to pull a sunken ship on the shore, while on the lateral sides of the monument, Metroac symbols are presented, like pedum, cymbals and Phrygian hat. The relief depicts the legend which Ovid describes in detail, by which Claudia Quinta saved the boat carrying Magna Mater's sacred image, upon its arrival to Rome, Ovid, *Fasti* IV.291. Under the iconographic scene, there is the inscription that Claudia Syntyche dedicates to Mater Deum and Navisalvia. Claudia Syntyche was probably a freedwoman of imperial family Claudii, to whom Claudia Quinta belonged, while her cognomen Syntyche is probably of Greek origin, therefore she could have been from Asia Minor which would explain her dedication to the Phrygian Mother of Gods, Leach 2007: 1-16; Vilogorac-Brčić 2012: 375-376.

[333] The fresco was found on the shop facade, in the Via dell 'Abbondanza at Pompeii (the right facade of the IX.7.1-2) and shows eighteen figures in a procession in the honour of Magna Mater. Four litter bearers carry a statue of the goddess, enthroned with lions, holding a patera, with sceptre, branch and tympanum on her left side. Beside the priests and priestesses, other participants of the procession are musicians, Potts 2009: 55-70.

[334] The marble relief of Laberia Felicia from Rome, dated to the 1st century, presents the highest priestess of the goddess with her upper body within a large shell. Laberia Felicia is veiled, dressed in sleeved chiton with himation over it, with the necklace and medallion presenting probably god Jupiter's bust. In her right hand she holds a patera, offering a sacrifice at an altar, while in her left hand there was probably a garland. Under her right arm, there is a small altar with fruits and under her figure, the inscription containing her name and position of Magna Mater's *sacerdos maxima*, is presented, *CCCI* III, 69, num. 258; Mucznik 1999: 67, fig. 4.

[335] The statue of Plancia Magna found in Pergamon and dated to the early 2nd century, shows the veiled priestess of Artemis who was also

sarcophagus of Gaius Junius Euhodus from Ostia, his spouse Metilia Acte is presented as Alcestis, Metroac symbols of cymbals, tympanum, torches and Attis' masks clearly allude to her function as one of the main priestesses of Magna Mater.[336] The goddess' priestesses were sometimes presented similarly to the goddess' priests, to the point of provoking debates between scholars as to whether the priest images represented women rather than men.[337] The examples of other priestesses of Magna Mater are numerous[338] and attest that these women belonged to the upper class and were wealthy, since their activities in the capacity of the goddess' priestesses encompassed many duties, like organising festivities and banquets in the goddess' honour, which were expensive tasks.[339] However, the priestesses of Magna Mater were also chosen from the lower social strata and among freed women.[340]The goddess' priestesses performed their function for a period of one year, although it could be extended for one additional year and, in rare cases, they could even serve their goddess all their lives.[341] Their obligations were various; they organised the festivities in honour of Magna Mater, surveyed other cult personnel, took part in cult processions, carried sacred vessels (*cernophorae*) and mourned the dead god Attis on *dies sanguinis.*[342] They also had many privileges, like sitting on an elevated throne in the theatre or being awarded with a crown by the city or by Magna Mater's adherents.[343]

A bronze appliqué of the goddess with a turreted crown, from Timacum Minus, was found in the locality where an important fortification with several building phases was situated with a settlement around it. In the first phase of Timacum Minus' military camp, Cohors I Thracum Syriaca, later Cohors II Aurelia Dardanorum and the pseudo comitatenses Timacenses auxiliarii, were garrisoned.[344] A considerable number of soldiers and civilians of Asia Minor, Syrian and Egyptian origin is attested in the locality, not only by Greek names on epigraphic monuments, but also by iconographic motifs on the monuments, which are undoubtedly of Asia Minor (Phrygian) origin.[345] The hypothesis regarding the existence of a smaller sanctuary or shrine of Magna Mater in Timacum Minus is not presumed from the finding of a bronze appliqué of a woman with a turreted crown, but on the grounds of the presence of numerous inhabitants of Asia Minor origin and the fact that goddess sanctuaries have been confirmed inside the fortifications. Unfortunately, the context of finding the bronze appliqué from Timacum Minus is unknown – it could have been found in a grave or in an area of sacralised space.[346] The epithets of Magna Mater to which she was referred are numerous and partly implied the way in which she was venerated by her devotees. On votive monuments and coins, the goddess was considered to be a guardian (*Custos, Conservatrix*) of individuals, but also of the Roman people and state.[347] That religious dimension of the goddess is known from Asia Minor and is attested on Maeonia's and Phrygia's confession inscriptions.[348] On the coins of Commodus,

a high priestess of Magna Mater for life. Her statue was placed along the city walls, together with the statues of members of the imperial family and other important persons. That she was a priestess of the imperial cult is implied by four imperial busts that ornament her crown, Mucznik 1999: 68-69, fig. 6.

336 The sarcophagus of Gaius Junius Euhodus and his spouse Metilia Acte was found in Ostia, dating between 161 and 170. Ostia was one of the most important centres of Metroac cult, confirmed by the Metroon and the temple of god Attis, together with inscriptions, statues, small finds etc. connected to Magna Mater and Attis, Vermaseren 1977: 60-63. The sarcophagus of Euhodus and Metilia Acte is one of the most beautiful examples of the mythical illustration of Alcestis and Admetus and its rich iconography allows insight into the soteriological and eschatological beliefs and ideas during the 2nd century. Since Metilia Acte was a priestess of Magna Mater, Metroac symbols decorate the sarcophagus, while the figures of winged Victoria flanking the inscription perhaps imply not only the deceased' victory over death but also their apotheosis, Mucznik 1999: 72-73. G. Sfameni Gasparro states that the scenes and symbols from Euhodus' sarcophagus underline the belief in resurrection and immortality, Sfameni Gasparro 1985: 98-101.

337 Latham 2016: 67.

338 Mucznik 1999: 61-78.

339 As in the case of the priestess Abba from Histria, who had to organize an expensive public banquet in the honour of Magna Mater, Ibid: 66. Among other wealthy priestess of the goddess, Sarapias (whose husband was *sacerdos phrygem maximum*, senator and *quindecimvir*) dedicated lavish altar to Magna Mater and Attis, while from the Aelia Antigona's inscription is known that she built a tomb for her and her husband during her life, which could also accommodate their freedmen and descendants (judging by her name, M. J. Vermaseren assumes that she was probably a freedwoman of Oriental origin), Vermaseren 1977: 48-49, 57.

340 Like for example Veronia Trofime from Verona, Salonia Euterpe from Salona and other priestesses whose names and positions are confirmed in the monuments from other Roman provinces, Graillot 1912: 249-251.

341 Mucznik 1999: 71.

342 The priestesses of the Magna Mater's cult had the obligations to organizing and supervise many chores: they organized the daily cleaning of the temple (done by *curatores*), cared about the sacred cult objects (supervised *apparatores*) and monitored the work in the administration.

343 MacMullan 1980: 215.

344 P. Petrović in the interpretation of the epigraphic monuments from Ravna (Timacum Minus), writes that 'on the votive monuments most numerous among the dedicants' names are Greek names, which belonged to the first wave of the Greek immigrants of Oriental provenience, their wives and other family members and partly to the significant number of the slaves and freedmen, also of probably Oriental origin', *IMS* III/2, 46-47. For more about the locality Ravna see Petković, Ružić, Jovanović, Vuksan, Zoffmann 2005.

345 The votive and funerary monuments with iconographical motives of the basket for wool – *calathus*, mirror, comb, rosette, crux gammata, connected arcs, spindle, distaff, niche were found in different localities of Moesia Superior like Ratiaria, Singidunum, Viminacium, Timacum Minus, Naissus and Scupi. Sometimes the names of the dedicants imply their Greek or Oriental origin, for more details see Gavrilović Vitas 2021 (in print).

346 P. Petrović presumes the existence of temples dedicated to Diana, Jupiter Dolichenus, Mithras and Mars (confirmed with epigraphic monuments, *IMS* III/2, num. 3, 6-9, 10, 11, 12, 14), perhaps to the god Jupiter and Thracian Rider in Timacum Minus, Ibid: 43.

347 The goddess has the epithet *Custos* on the votive monument of Gaius Hermogenianus Caesarius dated to the 4th century, *CIL* VI, 449; Duthoy 1969: 14, num. 13, while on the votive monument of Caelius Hilarianus the goddess is called *Conservatrix, CIL* VI, 500. On Commodus' coins issued between 191 and 192, Magna Mater has the epithet *Conservatrix,* Turcan 1983: 37.

348 Ricl 1995.

Magna Mater is called *Conservatrix* and R. Turcan presumes that she was honoured as the emperor's guardian against death threats (like the one from the criminal Maternus, who planned to kill Commodus), that is as the deity whose assistance would provide sufficient strength and power.[349] The goddess' epithet of *Omnipotens,* known from a votive monument of the senator Petronius Apollodorus and his spouse Rufina Volusiana, dated to 370, should be interpreted in a similar context.[350] The inscription reads that Magna Mater is the mother of all that exists and that, equated with Rhea, she rules Nature and all living beings. And that is what her worshippers believed in because, like Venus, she was the goddess of life, growth, but also physical pleasures.[351] She was also the protectress of women, pregnancy and birth[352] and, in a wider context, the guardian of the family.[353] As early as in the 5th century BC, Sophocles called her 'the elemental power' (παμβωτις), the one who founded everything, actually the true mother of all.[354] On a Roman monument from Corbridge, Magna Mater is referred to as Dea Panthea, just as Julian, in his Oration, also calls her.[355] Magna Mater is also the creator of everything on Earth, particularly of the harvest. Therefore, she is equated with Ceres and Bona Dea and was sometimes referred to by the name of Ceres.[356] Both of the goddesses were honoured as protectresses of agriculture, although Magna Mater was regarded as the deity of the aristocracy and the upper class, while Ceres was primarily the deity of Roman plebs.[357] This particular view of how Magna Mater and Ceres were honoured during Antiquity is even mirrored in the symbolic positions of their temples in Palatine, the Metroon was located near the imperial palace in the part where patrician families lived and Ceres' temple was built on Aventine, which was mainly inhabited by plebeian families.[358] On votive monuments from Egypt, Magna Mater was named a saviour (σωτειρα), but also the one who carefully listens to the prayers of her worshippers *(επηκόος).*[359] However, Magna Mater's benevolence does not always imply her calm nature – on several monuments from Gaul, the goddess was equated with the war goddess, Bellona.[360] Magna Mater's close connection with Nature is underlined by her being the protectress of mountains, caves, plants, trees, rivers and thermal sources and, therefore, health in general.[361] The goddess is *Optima Maxima,*[362] but like Nemesis, she is the implacable justice,[363] so she is somewhat similar to Isis, because she too 'invented justice'.[364] Pliny and Ovid describe her as the deity of fertility and life,[365] while Ovid also celebrates her as the goddess who tames wild animals.[366] Finally, she is the mistress of the dead, a chthonian deity, which is also implied on her monuments carved in rocks from Asia Minor.[367] The striking similarity in the architectural and iconographic elements of Cybele's /Magna Mater's monuments from western Phrygia and tomb chambers cut into rocks in western parts of Asia Minor (known as *shaft monuments*), cannot go unnoticed.[368] In scholarly literature, the prevailing opinion is that the

[349] Turcan 1983: 38.

[350] The votive altar of Petronius Apollodorus and his spouse Rufina Volusiana commemorated taurobolium and criobolium on 16th June 370. The epithet of the Magna Mater is given in a short Greek epigram, which precedes the inscription in Latin, *CIL* VI, 509; Duthoy 1969: 17-18, num. 22.

[351] Stewart 1970: 78.

[352] M. J. Vermaseren writes that Magna Mater, as Isis too, helps women during the childbirth and raising the children, Vermaseren 1988: 506.

[353] Votive inscriptions from Piraeus and votive statues of an enthroned goddess with a child in her lap from Athens, Kyme and Argos, imply the goddess's role as the protectress of the childbirth, children and family, Roller 1994: 257.

[354] Vermaseren 1977: 81.

[355] A votive altar found in Corbridge is dedicated to Dea Panthea, that is Magna Mater, *RIB* I, 1135. On the back of the monument, the head of Hermes Hegemonios in a winged cap is presented, while on the altar's lateral sides, figures of Attis and Mēn are shown, Harris, Harris 1965: 98.

[356] Lucretius calls Magna Mater the goddess who helps fruits to grow, the creator of the fruits, Lucretius *De rerum natura* II. 594. On the votive monument from Aquileia dated between 76 and 125, Magna Mater is called Ceres, *CIL* V, 796, as she is known as *Agraria* from the inscription on the votive monument from Rome, *CIL* III, 796.

[357] As B. Stanley Spaeth analyses, the ritual in the honour of goddess Ceres, *ieiunium Cereris,* was instituted by Roman Senat in 191 BC, according to the Sibylline Books. From then on, every five years on the 4th October, the ritual in the goddess's honour was celebrated (in later times, every year). The author also considers possible reasons for the introduction of the Ceres' ritual such a brief time after the arrival of Magna Mater in Rome and presumes that since Magna Mater's cult was associated with the patricians, the cult connected to the plebs was needed as the 'counterweight', Stanley Spaeth 1996: 93. Ceres was, as Magna Mater, called 'mother' (on a votive monument from Rome, Ibid: 42) and bore the same epithets as Magna Mater, like *alma* and *genetrix*, Vermaseren 1977: 83; Roller 1999: 223.

[358] Vermaseren 1977: 93.

[359] Two mentioned epithets are known from votive monuments found in Canopus, dated to the 3rd and 2nd century BC, *CCCA* V, 3-4, num. 3-4.

[360] Turcan 1996: 64.

[361] Votive monuments dedicated to *Mater Salutaris* as the one found in Germania's locality Lauingen, connect Magna Mater with Hygieia and Apollo Granus and show that the goddess was respected as an iatric deity, Graillot 1912: 490.

[362] On the votive monument from the locality Presenzano (Rufrae), commemorating taurobolium to *Matri Deum Optimae Maximae* in the period between 131 and 200, *CIL* X, 4829.

[363] The association between Magna Mater and Nemesis is attested on the votive monument from Ostia of *archigallus* Quintus Caecilius Fuscus, dated between 169 and 171, *CIL* XIV, 35.

[364] Vermaseren 1977: 139.

[365] Roller 1999: 280.

[366] Cybele was already on the monuments from Asia Minor honoured as the goddess who tames wild animals, as she was shown in iconographical presentations with birds of prey or lions, Vermaseren 1977: 84.

[367] Carved rock representations of the goddess are known from the central and the western parts of Asia Minor and are situated near the tombs like it is a case with goddess's monuments from Ankara and Gordion, Roller 1999:79.

[368] As the argument for the similarities between the goddess's presentations on the western Phrygia' rocks and funerary forms also cut in rocks in the same area, L. I. Roller numbers the iconographical analogies between the monuments from Arslankaya and tomb chambers from the locality Arslantas. On Arslankaya's monument two lions are standing on their hind legs, putting their front paws on the goddess's head, while on the lion relief over the grave in Aslantas, the lions prompted on their hind legs, are placing their front legs on the entrance of the tomb chamber, Roller 1999: 103-104.

symbols of Cybele /Magna Mater represented on the mentioned shaft monuments, indicated her chthonian dimension.[369] The mutual function of Magna Mater and Nemesis as guardians of graves is known from Smirna.[370] The chthonic aspect of Cybele / Magna Mater was presented during the Hellenistic period on monuments, like on the relief from Lebadeia, where the goddess is shown in the company of Persephone, Dionysus, perhaps Hecate, the local deity Trophonios, three kouretes and Dioscures.[371] During the Roman period, the chthonian function of Magna Mater was confirmed many times, as in Africa where she was identified with paredra of Dis Pater, while in different iconographic scenes she appears with chthonian deities par excellence like Hermes, Mēn, etc.[372] Magna Mater was a celestial goddess as well, her epithets *Urania* and *Caelestis* denote her as the one who rules the sky, like Isis and Dea Syria.[373] H. Graillot suggested that the lion and diadem present Magna Mater's astral attributes, while on the coins of Septimius Severus, the goddess is presented as Dea Caelestis.[374]

That on the territory of the Roman Central Balkans, Magna Mater was venerated as the imperial deity, that is as the protectress of the rivers and river trade and transport, we conclude from the epigraphic monuments found in Ratiaria and Viminacium. However, the fact that the epithet *Augusta* appears only on one cult monument of the goddess could imply that her dimension of the emperor's divine assistant was not the primary one for dedicants. Perhaps the same could be said for the name *Mater deum,* which is also attested on only one cult monument from Viminacium. If we turn to the sculptures and statues of Magna Mater (or her priestesses), we can conclude that local artisans possessed solid knowledge about her iconography. The iconographic type of the statues from Novo Selo and Karataš in the Danube Limes, most probably present the goddess in her function of the Great Mother, protectress of the individual who dedicated the statue. I am deliberately not considering the fragmented statue from Mediana, Niš in this group, because there the goddess could have been worshipped as the goddess of thermal springs, perhaps health too, because of the thermal springs situated nearby, in the Naissus spa (Niška banja). On the territory of Niš, particularly in and around Constantine's villa with peristylum at Mediana, marble and porphyry statues of Asclepius, Hygieia and Telesphoros and many fragments of their statues, were found, which could imply the existence of an Asclepius sanctuary at Mediana.[375] The iatric cults were favoured in southern parts of the Central Balkans territory and beside the cult monuments of Asclepius, Hygieia and Telesphoros from Mediana, a votive monument of the first known physician from Naissus, a certain Claudius Magnus, was found in the presumed sanctuary of Asclepius located in Niš Fortress.[376] Claudius Magnus dedicated the monument to the emperor Septimius Severus, with the names of Asclepius and Hygieia beside the representations of the gods on the monument.[377] In his analysis and interpretation of the sculptural and statuary finds of iatric deities at Mediana, M. Vasić concluded that during the reign of Julian the Apostate, the audience hall in Constantine's villa was turned into a sanctuary, divided from the rest of the hall with a bronze railing with herms with heads of Asclepius and Luna (herms with heads of Sol and Hygieia were not found with the discovery of the railing in 2000).[378]

I have already mentioned that the reliefs of Cybele/ Magna Mater inside an *aedicula*, as on the relief from Stobi, could present votive offerings to the goddess, but were also placed in graves, as grave goods. Thus, their function would imply a chthonian and perhaps soteriological aspect of the goddess. As a chthonian goddess, Magna Mater was the guardian of graves and the protectress of the souls of the dead. Being first the deity of fertility and the protectress of the family, Mother Goddess shields the deceased, who are, after

[369] In the opinion of V. Ozkaya, shaft monuments were actually 'pits' over which a wooden platform was put and they served for the ritual of taurobolium, Ozkaya 1997: 95, 97-98. S. Berndt-Ersoz thinks that shaft monuments were the places where prophecies were told to the goddess's devotees, Berndt-Ersoz 1998: 96-98.

[370] Beside the chthonian aspect that two goddesses shared, they were also connected by their mutual celestial dimension, Graillot 1912: 204-205.

[371] Roller 1999: 227.

[372] Graillot 1912: 202 and further. There are many presentations of Magna Mater and god Mēn, so I'll just mention the votive stele from Louvre found in Asia Minor locality Ouchak, on which the goddess is shown with Mēn Uranius, celestial and chthonian god, Ibid: 359, ft.8. Somewhat rarer are the presentations of the goddess with Hermes Psychopompos from the Hellenistic period, Ibid: 397.

[373] Epigraphic monuments on which Magna Mater is called by the name Caelestis and archaeological monuments with the presentations of the goddess Cybele/Magna Mater-Caelestis, are particularly numerous on the territory of northern Africa. On many lamps, the image of Cybele/Magna Mater-Caelestis riding a lion is attested, *CCCA* V, 24-25, num. 60, 26, num. 66, 28, num. 76, 39, num. 106, 40, num. 110 and 113. M. Henig describes that in the Donatianus' poem from Carvoran, Julia Domna was identified with Dea Syria and Virgo (Juno) Caelestis, Henig 1984: 200.

[374] Turcan 1996: 58; Graillot 1912: 196-198. Both goddesses, Magna Mater and local African deity Caelestis were protectresses of travels and going and coming in opposite directions (*itus* and *reditus*). Due to the syncretism with Dea Caelestis, Magna Mater's cult enjoyed popularity in North Africa, Bell 2007: 144, 165.

[375] For the new results and the sculptures and statues of iatric deities from Mediana, see Васић, Милошевић, Гавриловић 2014: 231-263; Vasić, Milošević, Gavrilović Vitas, Crnoglavac 2016; Vasić 2018: 89-109.

[376] The votive monument was discovered in 1984. year, during the archaeological excavations led on the area of central plato of Niš Fortress, in a room of a presumed sanctuary or *valetudinarium*. The room in which the monument was found was richly fresco-painted, as the monument was also covered with the traces of red paint in the area of the inscription, Дрча 2001: 19-26.

[377] D. Grbić presumes that Claudius Magnus was attached to the cohort I Dardanorum, which was situated in Niš from the time of Marcus Aurelius, and that he was engaged, beside taking care of the sick and wounded, in the recruitment of soldiers, Грбић 2013: 64.

[378] In M. Vasić's opinion, the sanctuary of god Aesculapius was established during the reign of Julian the Apostate and lasted until his death, Vasić 2018: 89-109.

death, placed under her protection. This religious dimension of Cybele/Magna Mater is attested from the earliest period of her cult, in Asia Minor and then, later, in Greece. However, the epigraphic and archaeological evidence of Magna Mater particularly as a chthonian deity is quite rare in the western provinces.[379] It is easier to indirectly document the goddess's chthonian character if she appears together with another chthonian deity or deities or if the location of the monument's finding indicates the context in which the goddess was venerated. In that sense, it is possible to presume that the bust of Magna Mater of unknown provenience and the woman's head from Karataš were grave goods, which would be substantiated by the analogies from the localities outside the Central Balkans territory.[380]

The same assumption could be made in the case of the bronze appliqué shaped as the goddess's bust from the locality of Ravna (Timacum Minus). Cybele / Magna Mater with a *corona muralis* was at first honoured as the protectress of the city and city walls, as the mistress of Nature and, in the wider context, as the protectress of the individual and the inventor of life.[381] Of course, it would be much easier to pinpoint the exact aspect under which Magna Mater was worshipped if the exact context of the monuments' finding were known, which is, unfortunately, not the case with most of our monuments. However, what is certain is that smaller objects, which were portable, as in any cult, had particular value for their owners who venerated the goddess and represented a strong bond between the worshipper who owned the object and the deity.

The silver plate with the representation of Magna Mater from the Tekija hoard was a cult object worn during ritual practices, either by a priest or initiates in the cult. The two holes presented beside the goddess' head suggest that it was worn as a pectoral, fixed to the clothes of a priest or a devotee. The soteriological and eschatological symbolism of the object can be presumed, as in the case of another silver plate found in the same hoard, which represents the god Sabazius. Since on other plates from the hoard, different deities are presented, we cannot be sure if the owner of the hoard, the soldier Gaius Valerius Cresces, was initiated into Magna Mater's or Sabazius' cult or if he was, for that matter, a devotee of some other deity.

However, an indirect implication of the goddess' chthonic, but also celestial character, could be found in the stone statues of lions in a lying or sitting position, with a ram's head under their paw. In the Central Balkans territory, stone monuments of lions are known from the wider area of Užice (western parts of the Central Balkans), Belgrade (Singidunum) and Požarevac (Viminacium).[382] Sporadic finds were constated in Negotin, Čuljevina, the territory of Pljevlja (presumed Municipium S) and Skelani (presumed Municipium Malvesatium).[383] All stone statues of lions so-far found in the territory of the Central Balkans can be divided into two groups: those that represented architectural plastic of sacral buildings and tombs, and those used as parts of funerary monuments. Larger statues of lions were certainly part of architectural plastic, placed on the approach to a temple or to a tomb, while smaller statues were composite parts of grave monuments. Also, from the territory of Viminacium and Skelani, compositions of a pair of lions placed with their backs turned to each other with a motif between them (usually a pine cone) are known and represented the pinnacle of funerary monuments. What makes the analysis and connotation of the stone statues of lions difficult is the absence of the context of their finding. For some of them, however, such as the finds from Belgrade, the exact location of the finding is known and it is *in situ*, in or near the grave of the deceased.[384] A similar use of stone lion statues is known from the Roman necropolises in the localities of Kalenić and Karan in western parts of the Central Balkans, where the statues were used as grave stones.[385] Some of the stone lion statues can be linked to a presumed *mithreum* at a particular locality, like the lion statue from the locality of Vranjani or two lion statues found in Viminacium. The cult of the god Mithras is epigraphically confirmed in both localities and these finds of stone lion statues are analogous to those known from *Mithraea* I and II in Heddernheim, *Mithraea* I, II and III in Carnuntum, the *Mithraeum* in Stockstadt, the *Mithraeum* in Kônigshofe and *Mithraeum* II in Poetovio.[386] The symbolism of lions

[379] Medini 1980: 355a.

[380] Two fragmented statues of Magna Mater of similar dimensions as our monuments were found beside the remains of two sarcophagi in Splonum (Split), so J. Medini presumes that they perhaps presented grave goods, Medini 1981: 522-523.

[381] Ibid: 87.

[382] Ibid: 93. The earliest finds of this type of funerary monuments were confirmed in northern Italy from where they spread on the eastern part of Adriatic and from there, in the interior of province Dalmatia. In his analysis of funerary monuments in the shape of a lion, M. Vasić presumes previously written, as D. Dimitrov, who thinks that this type of funerary monuments arrived in Thrace already in the 1st century with the soldiers from northern Italy, Зотовић 1995: 127.

[383] Eight stone statues of a lion in lying position were found in the wider territory of Užice (localities Kalenić, Karan, Požega, Visibaba), six or seven stone statues of a lion in lying position were found in Singidunum, 15 stone statues of a lion in lying or sitting position were found in the area of Požarevac, Viminacium, while sporadic finds are known from the localities Negotin, Čuljevina, Aranđelovac, Pljevlja, Skelani, Зотовић 1995a: 123-130; Зотовић 2003: 87-96; Зотовић 2004: 21-29.

[384] Two statues of lions in lying position were found above the grave of the incinerated deceased, therefore S. Pop-Lazić thinks that they probably stood either as gravestones above the grave or they were placed at the entrance to the fenced area of the family tomb (*area maceria cincta*) and during the time, secondarily used as grave marks above the tombs of incinerated deceased, Pop-Lazić 2002: 80-81.

[385] Зотовић 1995a: 128.

[386] Зотовић 1979: 94; Walsh : 80-81.

Stone figure of lion from Čuljevina

Stone figure of lion from Karan

Stone figures of lions from Požarevac
(photo-documentation: National museum Čačak, National museum Požarevac)

is well known, as in Mesopotamia, where the animal symbolised the Sun and celestial power, while in the funerary context they had a role of tomb guardians.

Returning to the stone statues of lions with their paw on a ram's head, their relationship with Magna Mater is based on the fact that both animals, the lion and the ram, are the goddess' animal companions and a part of Metroac imagery. The motif of a lion holding his paw on a ram's head is known from relief and statuary monuments of the goddess. The stone lion statues with a ram's head under their paw were used as *acroteria*, appearing from the 2nd century and in use until the middle of the 3rd century. Funerary monuments with this type of *acroteria* were first constated in northern Italy, from where they spread to the eastern Adriatic coast, through central Dalmatia (Podrinje and Polimlje), Pannonia Inferior (Sirmium), Moesia Superior and then Dacia.[387] The motif of a lion or lions resting a paw on ram's head is known from the funerary monuments discovered in Rhine provinces, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia and Moesia Superior. Lion statues on a stone pedestal also represented parts of funerary monuments to which they were fixed by iron spikes. Three stone statues of a lying lion resting its paw on a ram's head are known from Viminacium and could be linked with the cult of Magna Mater, since it is epigraphically confirmed in the locality.[388] Also, a composition of a pair of lions placed with their backs turned to each other holding under one paw a ram's head was discovered in Viminacium, which could be associated to the cult of the goddess.[389] In the composition between the lions, a standing figure is represented, of which only the lower part of the legs and probably a fragment of a torch, are preserved. The figure could represent one of Mithras' torch-bearers (dadophors), Cautes or Cautopates, or the god Attis who was represented in Central Balkan funerary monuments with a torch instead of shepherd's staff, a *pedum*. An interesting detail can be observed on the head of the left lion in this Viminacium composition: it has a small round hole that implies that

[387] Vasić 1973: 136. Stone statues of lions in the funerary use found in the province Dacia, dating from the 2nd and the 3rd century, mostly represent sitting or lying animals, but usually without ram's head under one paw, Popa, Totoianu 2009: 73-90.

[388] Зотовић 2003: 88, 92, num. 2, 4, 6.

[389] Ibid: 92, num. 13.

some round object was placed on the animal's head. Perhaps it could have been a pine cone, known to be present on some monuments of a lion holding a ram's head under its paw. This hypothesis could be further supported with another lion statue from Viminacium, which is not holding its paw on a ram's head, but whose tail ends in the shape of a pine cone.[390] The monuments of lions from Viminacium are dated from the second half of the 2nd century to the end of the 3rd century. Epigraphic and archaeological monuments of Magna Mater have shown that she was venerated based on different aspects in the Central Balkans, as a goddess of fertility and well-being of an individual but also of the family, the protectress of Nature and agriculture, cities and regions, health, but also as a celestial and chthonian deity.

All these offered assumptions about the different functions that Magna Mater could have in the eyes of her devotees in the Roman Central Balkans, raise another important question: who were the worshippers of the goddess? The answer to this question is complicated by the fact that we have only one votive monument from Viminacium which contains some information about the goddess' adherent, Gaius Valerius Vibianus. Therefore, it is necessary to turn to the facts about the presence of Asia Minor or, in a wider sense, Oriental ethnos in the localities of the Central Balkans, attested with epigraphic inscriptions. Residents of Asia Minor origin have been confirmed in Singidunum, Viminacium, Timacum Minus, Bela Palanka (Remesiana), Naissus, Ulpiana and Scupi. However, their presence in other localities where they had settled for some period of time or forever cannot be presumed, as it would be inaccurate to assume that they represented the only carriers of Magna Mater's cult in the Central Balkans. Also, we cannot be sure that any dedicant of Asia Minor origin attested in epigraphic monuments from Roman Central Balkan centres were worshippers of only the Metroac cult, and not perhaps of some other cult. Therefore, on the grounds of Magna Mater's monuments and the information we currently possess, we can only assume that the spectrum of the goddess' adherents included individuals of Asia Minor, Syrian and Greek origin, as well as persons of Italic or indigenous origin. Although the only certainly attested of the goddess' dedicants in the Central Balkans was a man, analogous to other Roman provinces where women were loyal and dedicated devotees of Magna Mater, it can be presumed that they were among the goddess' worshippers. Not only that, in other Roman provinces we have proof of the important role that women played in the performing of the *taurobolium* and sacrifice of the vires instead of the *gallus* (as two altars from Lectoure and Alzey show), but women were also appointed as 'mothers' by the *collegium dendrophori* (a particular cult association of Magna Mater), that is they were selected as patronesses of *dendrophori* like, for example, Claudia Arria and Iunia Zosime.[391] Epigraphic monuments attest cases of mixed membership, where women were among the *sacerdotes* of the *collegium dendrophorum*, as in Regium Iulium, or they were members of the collegium, as in Serdica.[392]

A similar situation would apply in the context of the professions and social status of the goddess' devotees, who were probably soldiers, merchants, artisans, freedmen and slaves. Unlike in the important centres of the Metroac cult, such as Salona, for example, where the existence of religious associations as part of Magna Mater's cult, known as *cognatii,* is attested,[393] so far, no private cult associations of the goddess' adherents has been affirmed in the Central Balkans territory. Also, unlike in the geographically closest provinces of Dalmatia or Moesia Inferior,[394] in the Central Balkans territory no testimony about Magna Mater's *collegia*, like the *collegium dendrophorum*, *collegium cannophorum* or *collegium* of *hastiferi*, exists. The characteristics of Magna Mater's cult in the Central Balkans' Roman provinces

[390] Milovanović 2009: 18.

[391] *CIL* XIV, 326, *CIL* XIV, 69; Hemelrijk 2008: 126-127.

[392] There was a difference between patronesses and mothers of the *collegium dendrophorum* – patronesses donated altars or statues, financed communal celebration of their birthdays, donated land or buildings and their birthdays were celebrated publicly. Mothers of the collegium, however, didn't enjoy the public celebration of their birthdays, they were honoured within the collegium. The superior status of the patroness of the collegium was mirrored in their high position and honours she received by the collegium, which was closely linked to her high social status. Mothers of the collegium were of modest social status, however their names were carved in the list of collegium' members when they dedicated a statue or altar, which implies that those women were proud of their roles in collegium and title mater colegii, which strengthen their social position in the community, Hemelrijk 2008: 126-127.

[393] The religious associations, known as *cognatii*, are mentioned on seven inscriptions from Salona, a significant Metroac centre in Roman province Dalmatia. These associations were formed by Magna Mater's believers gathered for specific reasons and needs, like maintenance of the shrine (and its renewal) and cult site in a different part of Salona. J. Medini connected *cognatii* with the Greek associations which were taking care of the burial and maintaining of the graves of deceased members, Medini 1985: 24. J. Medini also stated that *cognatii* only at the beginning of their existence comprehended that blood relations between the members should exist, which later disappeared, Medini 1981: 323 and further. B. Migotti emphasised the funerary character of the *cognatii* and compared them to medieval fraternities, Migotti 1986: 182-183. S. Bekavac thinks that *cognatii* emerged from a private cult where initially all members were blood relatives, while afterwards (particularly following the changes made by Claudius and with the popularization of Magna Mater's cult), the role of cognatio members, who now included non-relatives (but in a spiritual sense all members had the same mother – Magna Mater), was to take care for shrines, their renewal and to organize Megalensia, Bekavac 2013: 187-203.

[394] *CIL* III, 8823; The bas-relief found in Svištov (Novae) presents a standing divine pair – Cybele and the Great God (Teos Megas). Dated to the 2nd century, the marble relief is particularly interesting because of its inscription since a priest Lucius Oppius Maximus presents a gift to two *collegia* – dendrophorum and dumopireti. The term *dumopireti* caused quite discussion in scholarly literature because of its meaning, but it probably designated the guardians of fire in goddess's temple, *AE* 1929, 120; Tacheva-Hitova 1983: 73-74, num. 4; *CCCA* VI: 116, num. 385.

are, in some ways, similar to the goddess' cult in Dacia, where her devotees were mainly attested in military environments; four of eight inscriptions dedicated to the deity were found in the largest urban centre of the province, Apulum.[395] However, the votive monument from Viminacium implies the possible existence of some *collegium* of Magna Mater in the Central Balkans territory - Gaius Valerius Vibianus was the *quinquennalis* of the *collegium nautarum*, which means that he presided over the *collegium*. It is known that *quinquennales* could be officers of different *collegia*, but they could also be engaged in religious activities (like *seviri Augustales*, *augurs* or *flamines*) and lead religious associations.[396] Each of the three Magna Mater *collegia* (*dendrophori, cannophori* and *hastiferi*) had their obligations, but also their rights. *Scholae* were the places where members of a particular *collegium* gathered and, although the buildings had a similar appearance to temples (in an architectural context), their appearance did not reveal their sacral character.[397] However, while in Central Balkan localities no traces of *taurobolium* or *criobolium* were attested, some authors have presumed that in the crypt of a small temple in Felix Romuliana, those rites were performed.[398] As has already been discussed in the previous chapter, no arguments supporting such an assumption exist. Outside of the Central Balkans, in the territory of the province of Dalmatia, the existence of *fossa sanguinis* was presumed at the localities of Zecovi and Zadar, but no solid archaeological proof for those assumptions has been found either.[399] The only place where *taurobolia* and *criobolia* could have been performed in the province of Dalmatia is, as I. Vilogorac Brčić rightly observes, Salona, since in the inscription of Curia Prisca, *forfices* and *catillum* are listed as part of the cult inventory of Magna Mater's temple in the city, which is also implied with the dedication to the goddess, with the abbreviation *VVBS*, perhaps indicating *Vires Valentes*.[400]

As it would be inaccurate to presume the exact degree of the diffusion of Magna Mater's cult judging by the ethnicity of her adherents, it would be similarly erroneous to presume the existence of a hierarchy among her worshippers in the Central Balkans, although the presence of the goddess' priests is highly likely in the territory, which is so close to the province of Dalmatia where the presence of the goddess' *archigalli* and *galli* is attested.[401] It can be further presumed that the clergy of the goddess from the Central Balkan locality or localities were subordinated to the archigallus from Salona in Dalmatia, to whom they reported, in the context of the organisation and performance of different activities and rites in honour of the goddess. The goddess' priests were probably indigenous Phrygians or of Asia Minor origin, being in charge of the organisation of ceremonies in the goddess' honour and ritual practices. A particular category of Magna Mater devotees known as the *Misti* were most probably present in some of the bigger Central Balkan centres, like Ratiaria or Viminacium.[402] The *Misti* were actually persons who were accepted into the closest circle of Magna Mater's devotees through a special ritual and were deeply loyal only to the goddess, engaging only in the ritual practices of her cult (excluding the cult festivities of an official character).[403] Beside the *Misti,*

[395] Ota, Szabó 2015: 227-244.

[396] The similar possibility is offered by I. Vilogorac Brčić in the interpretation of the votive monument of Lucius Statius Facula from Salona, who was *quinquennalis* of unknown association, but since he vows to finance the temple of Magna Mater, I. Vilogorac Brčić presumes that he could have been engaged in some of the collegia connected to the goddess's cult, perhaps in collegium dendrophorum, since that collegium is epigraphically confirmed in Salona, Vilogorac Brčić 2012: 133-141.

[397] J. Medini cites alternative terms for *schola dendrophorum*, like *locus* and *basilica*, which in his opinion implies the profane character of the buildings, Medini 1981: 344-639.

[398] Srejović, Lalović, Janković 1979: 54-63; Čanak-Medić, Stojković-Pavelka 2011: 78.

[399] As I already mentioned, certain scholars doubt the existence of *fossa sanguinis* and presume that the term was a metaphor devised by Prudentius and anonymous writer of the Poem against the pagans, to draw a parallel between pagan rituals and the killing of Christian martyrs, McLynn 1996: 319; Alvar 2008: 163. A presumed cult object which consisted of a corridor, area for sacrificing and subterranean chamber, was discovered in the locality Zecovi near Prijedor, dated by the found coins to the period from 319 to 390. The dimensions of a subterranean room were 6-6,5x3,5-4m. A. Benac presumed that the cult object was built in the first half of the 4th century and lasted until the end of the 4th century. Based on the finds of bull's skulls and bones, the author concluded that the object had two phases of use: in the first phase, the object was used for the sacrifices to Magna Mater and the performing of taurobolium, while in the second phase, the subterranean room was buried and the sacrifices continued to be performed in the upper room. J. Medini agrees with the assumption of A. Benac, that the subterranean chamber was used for taurobolium. However, even if we are to suppose that the taurobolium according to Prudentius' words existed and was performed in the cult object in Zecovi, many elements are against it – for example, the height of the subterranean room is only 1m, which means that the tauroboliatus couldn't stand, but only lie on the floor. No temple of Magna Mater was constated near by nor in the wider area of Zecovi. The discovery of a complex which encompassed a chamber with a mosaic floor, a chamber with frescoes and cistern, in the south-western side of the antique forum in Iader, made M. Suić believe that it was a sanctuary of Magna Mater. The remains of a floor below the level of the pavement led to a pit (artificially dug with the depth of almost 2m and width of 0,6m), which M. Suić identified with *fossa sanguinis*. Other elements have been discovered in the complex as well, like fragments of fresco-painting representing in M. Suić's opinion Magna Mater (with letters MAGN, which M. Suić reconstructs as *Magn(ae) deorum matri*) and a lion and fragments of a box with representations of a coronated bull and two Erotes (who lead the animal to the sacrifice and for whom the author believes that represent a cultrarius and victimarius). The author believes that all mentioned finds imply that the discovered complex was Magna Mater's sanctuary, where public taurobolia were performed in honour of the emperor. J. Medini supported M. Suić's opinion, but R. Duthoy rejected it, claiming that *fossa sanguinis* had to be at least several meters deep, Benac 1969: 115-134; Suić 1963: 100-104, 109-114; Medini 1981: 229-252.

[400] Vilogorac Brčić 2017: 397.

[401] Medini 1981; Nikoloska 2007; Karković Takalić 2017.

[402] *Misti* of both sexes were called *Sacrati.* Among them, hierarchy existed and the superior *Sacratus* was called *Dux Misticus* (like for example Rufius Caeonius who in the altar commemorating his taurobolium in 377 in Rome, declares himself to be the leader of *Misti* and in charge of the mysteries, *CIL* VI, 511), Graillot 1912: 172, 282-283.

[403] Medini 1981: 346.

there were also the *Consacrani* (known as *Symmystes* in Greek), that is Metroac worshippers who formed their own associations, separate from the associations of the *Misti.*[404] We can assume the existence of a third group of Magna Mater adherents, who were not well acquainted with the theology and ritual practices of the cult, but were attracted to the eschatological and soteriological content of the teachings at the core of the goddess' cult, while also seeing in their incorporation into the Metroac cult, the opportunity to express their loyalty and respect for the Roman emperor and the Roman state, closely related to the Phrygian goddess. Archaeological monuments allow us to suppose that the cult of Magna Mater, as well as that of Attis, were favoured by the indigenous population of the Central Balkans because they were associated with fertility, agriculture and pastoralism, as were the indigenous deities worshipped in the pre-Roman period. Discussing the names of Magna Mater's devotees in the province of Dalmatia, J. Medini suggested the possibility that the names derived from the root *Hilarus/a* (personal names like Hilarus or Hilara, -ia, derived from the term *Hilaria,* which marked the cult festivities connected to the god Attis' resurrection, held on 25th March), could designate the goddess' worshippers. In the context of Magna Mater's devotees from the Central Balkan localities, this hypothesis does not reveal anything, since names derived from *Hilarus/a* are only known on two monuments found in Stojnik and Viminacium,[405] contrary to the western part of the Roman province of Dalmatia, where they are much more frequent.[406]

As for the possible temples of the goddess in the Central Balkans, two localities have been mentioned in that context and, in my opinion, it is probable that the goddess was venerated in both places, but in a different capacity. Presumably the sanctuary of Magna Mater in Viminacium was of a private character and probably a modest structure where the goddess's worshippers could gather and pay their respects to her. The other temple of Magna Mater, as has been shown by its architectural plan and the grandeur with which it was built, could be the so-called small temple in Felix Romuliana, Gamzigrad. Its character was public and, as Lactantius states, sacrifices were performed on a daily basis to the favoured deity of Galerius' mother Romula, presumably Cybele/Magna Mater.

If we take a look at the chronology of Magna Mater's monuments, excluding the silver plate from the Tekija hoard which is dated to the first half of the 1st century, all the monuments belong to the period of the 2nd and the 3rd century, actually to the period when the Metroac cult was the strongest in the entire Roman Empire. A lone exception is presented in the fragmented statue of the goddess from Mediana, which is, judging by her stylistic characteristics, dated to the first quarter of the 4th century. Rare confirmations of Magna Mater's cult in Late Antiquity should not be surprising, bearing in mind the two forceful religions which threatened to jeopardise the Metroac religion – Mithraism and Christianity. It is important to remember that 4th century paganism was at the end of its existence – only three cults were still practiced and had their ardent worshippers – the cults of Isis, Magna Mater and Mithras.[407] However, none of these cults had a firm organisation, nor did they accept all people regardless of their sex and social class into their closed circles. The public festivities of Magna Mater's cult were still experienced by ordinary people as very exotic and strange, in one word 'foreign', when compared to the traditional Roman cults.[408] The cult of the god Mithras was very popular in the Central Balkan provinces and, considering that no syncretism has yet been testified between the cult of the Persian god and the cult of the Phrygian goddess, it can be presumed that they probably developed independently in the territory, with Mithraism becoming more favoured during the 3rd century, while the Metroac cult weakened. I would agree with the opinion of J. Medini, however, that Christianity presented a more serious danger to the cult of Magna Mater, because as the new, fresh and well organised religion, it gathered more and more followers over time. Numerous similarities between the Metroac cult and Christianity have often been discussed in scholarly literature, with the accent on their mutual belief in salvation and the eternal life of the soul after death and the similarities between Magna Mater represented as a virgin goddess and the Virgin Mary, and the god Attis represented as a shepherd as Christ was also shown.[409] The similarities were evident in the rituals of the two religions as well – the celebration day of Attis's resurrection, known as the festival of *Hilaria,* was marked on 25th of March, in the week in which Christians celebrate the rebirth of Christ. Additionally, the last phase of the taurobolium, where presumably the initiation into Magna Mater's cult was marked by a blood 'baptism', was interpreted as being similar to the Christian rite of baptism with water. As water purified, regenerated and gave physical and moral strength to

[404] While *misti* are not epigraphically confirmed, *Consacrani* are known from several inscriptions, *CIL* XIII, 147; *CIL* XIII, 7865; *CIL* XIII, 1561; *CIL* III, 2109; *CIL* XII, 5379.

[405] We are referring to the votive monument from Stojnik with the name Marcus Aurelius Hilerio, *IMS* I, 139, num. 125 and votive monument with the name of Valeria Hilara from Viminacium, *IMS* II, 117, num. 85.

[406] Medini 1981: 306-310.

[407] Browning 1978: 45.

[408] M. Beard points out that in Imperial period constant tension existed over the question what is Roman and what is foreign in the cult of Magna Mater. The author describes that on the one side Romans rejected the goddess's cult as something dangerous (because of its foreign origin), while on the other side, they incorporated the cult 'in the symbolic forms of state power', Beard 1994: 166.

[409] Fear 1996: 38-40.

the one being baptised, so the blood of the sacrificed animals (as with the blood of the *galli* during their self-mutilation) contained all these empowering elements for the initiated.[410] The cult of Magna Mater and Attis was a serious opponent to Christianity; not only did it present a very old cult which was closely associated to the Trojan origin of the Romans, it also contained eschatological-soteriological beliefs which were still very attractive to the believers. Consequently, Christian writers took to mocking and ridiculing the features of the Metroac cult, which, from the goddess' arrival in Rome were her weak point, and included her eunuch priests, the bizarre elements of the cult's celebration mirrored in the *galli*'s frantic dance, the music and self-mutilation and the castration of the goddess's devotees. Open conflicts between Metroac worshippers and Christians started after the Edict of Milan in 313, with the situation escalating after Julian's death. For Christian writers, the Metroac cult was demonic with monstrous rites. For St. Augustine, Magna Mater was *dea meretrix*, the *galli* were 'castrated perverts' and the god Attis was a victim of the goddess's jealousy.[411] The author continues with his contempt for the goddess's priests, in regard to their 'pomaded hair and powdered faces', which were suitable for Carthage, but not for Rome.[412] Servius writes that 'Romans cultivated the *sacra* of the Mother of the Gods in Phrygian ways,'[413] while in *Carmen contra paganos,* by an anonymous writer, senators are condemned because of their worship of Magna Mater and proclaiming Attis to be the Sun.[414]

Lactantius states that the *galli* are not even people, while Minutius Felix adds that they sacrifice their virility to the goddess, which represents torture and not a cult.[415] Tertulian mocks Magna Mater as the one who should have known about Marcus Aurelius' death, alluding to the event in Sirmium, when the goddess' *archigallus* performed a libation with his own blood after lancing his arms, for the health and well-being of Marcus Aurelius, not knowing that he had died few days previously.[416] Surrounded by blooming Christianity, the Metroac cult was, like other pagan cults, slowly decaying – Valentinian II prohibited the goddess' devotees from honouring Magna Mater or offering sacrifices to her, while the goddess' statues, altars and sanctuaries were damaged or destroyed. Cases in which the goddess' temples were even destroyed, like when a Christian soldier burned the Metroon in Pontus or when Christians destroyed the goddess' altar in Pessinus, became a common occurrence.[417] Along with the destruction of every trace of the Metroac cult, followers and worshippers of Magna Mater were tortured and killed. In 415, by order of the second Imperial constitution, the *collegium dendrophorum* was abolished together with other pagan associations.[418] However, although at the beginning of the 6th century, the Metroac cult did not exist anymore, traces of Magna Mater's religion and ritual practices were present in *sacra loci*, where Christian churches were built on or near the place where Magna Mater's temples existed, thus attesting religious continuance.[419]

[410] Alvar 2008: 227.

[411] Augustine, *De civ. dei,* VI. 7.

[412] Ibid: VII. 26. St. Augustine was one of the most ardent Christian Fathers who mocked pagan practices and beliefs and ridiculed the cult of Magna Mater and Attis. Although he himself witnessed to the celebrations of Megalensia, he describes the rites of the goddess as deplorable and performed by vulgar actors, as *galli* were effeminate because they didn't serve the true deity and were self-mutilating themselves in the honour of Attis. His resentment towards Magna Mater went so far that he thought that she was worshipped by the consecration of mutilated men whom she brought to Roman temples, Ibid.

[413] Servius, *Ad Aeneid* XII. 836.

[414] Anonymous, *Carmen contra paganos.* The anonymous writer expresses particular horror and abomination towards the ritual of taurobolium and the moment of initiate's baptism by bull's blood, McLynn 1996: 318 and further.

[415] Borgeaud 2004: 99. Lactantius states that *galli* are not women or men, therefore they have nothing human in them, Carcopino 1923: 245.

[416] Tertulian, *Apology for the Christians,* XXV. 83.

[417] Showerman 1901: 328.

[418] Van Haeperen 2012: 55. The archaeological excavations led between 1987. and 2000. year in the Basilica Hilariana on the Caelian Hill, where the sacred pine of Attis was conserved and where the administrative headquarters for the *collegium dendrophori* was situated, showed that the basilica was used for different activities and underwent several changes: throughout the 4th century, it was used for the practising of Magna Mater's cult by the senatorial aristocracy, like Symachhus family. The decline of the building's function in the context of Metroac cult was probably a result of the law in 415, because in the middle of the 5th century, the Basilica underwent a change of function, with workshops occupying the large part of the reception rooms and the corridors of the southern and northern wings and other rooms. The workshops were destroyed in the first half of the 6th century, Diosono 2016: 263-269.

[419] Borgeaud 2004: 90. This tradition of building early Christian buildings at the same place as Magna Mater's temples is known from different localities, for example, Gradina Zecovi near Prijedor, where the remains of goddess's temple and perhaps traces of taurobolium were discovered, with the remains of the early Christian church from the 5th or the 6th century located several meters from it. Also, the cathedral in Senj (Senia) dedicated to the Mother of God was built close by Magna Mater's temple in the same locality, Medini 1981: 382. The same custom can be observed in the western parts of Central Balkans' Roman provinces, where on or near the places of antique temples, early Christian churches were built.

2. Attis

2.1. The Cult of Attis in Graeco-Roman culture

The cult and nature of the god Attis have, numerous times, been discussed in scholarly literature and after different much debate, two main streams of opinions can be seen: one group of scholars think that Attis was an old Asia Minor deity of vegetation, associated with the Mother Goddess in the context of her fertility aspect.[420] The other group of authors suggest that Attis was not a god in Phrygia, but only became one after the arrival of his cult to Greece and, later, Rome.[421] Epigraphic and archaeological monuments from Asia Minor with the name of Attis are not known before the 4th century BC.[422] The name Attis (*Αττις, Αττης, Atys, Attis, Attin*)[423] is confirmed on paleo-Phrygian inscriptions in the form *Atas,* from the locality of Çepni, dated between the 7th and the 6th century BC.[424] Also, the paleo-Phrygian form *Ates* is attested on pottery from tumulus D near the locality of Bayindir in Lycia in a funerary context, but also on several archaeological monuments from the area between the localities of Yazihkaya and Gordion.[425] Finally, the name Attis (in the form *Ates*)[426] is known as the name of a dedicant from the well known Midas monument carved into the rocks, who might have been a member of the royal family or even the king himself.[427] L. E. Roller thinks that the name *Attis* from paleo-Phrygian inscriptions does not have any connection to the later god Attis from the Roman period, but is probably related to members of Phrygian royal families.[428] M. G. Lancellotti agrees with the offered opinion, stating that the oldest cult of the god Attis actually represented the cult of a royal family member, probably in the Hittite period and, later, in the Phrygian period.[429] In any case, the earliest mention of the name Attis in the form known to Graeco-Roman culture is attested in the comedy of Theopompus.[430] Before I present a concise review of the evolution of Attis' cult and aspects under which he was venerated, three known versions of the myth about the deity are necessary to be briefly reviewed, to allow the proper understanding of the god's iconography and the symbolism he possessed during Antiquity. H. Hepding distinguishes two main versions of Attis' myth in the context of the region where the mythical tale took place. The author differentiates between the Phrygian and Lydian version of the myth.[431] The third mythical version is known as 'euhemeristic' and it is known from the Library of History, by Diodorus Siculus.[432] The Phrygian myth is attested in the works of several ancient writers, like Ovid, Pausanius and Arnobius,[433] with Arnobius being the most detailed because, in his mythical version, some older versions by other authors are included.[434] In short, Arnobius writes about Zeus' copulation with the rock Agdos, from which an androgynous being Agdistis, of wild nature, was born.[435] To restrain it in some way, the gods of Olympus bound Agdistis, but as it woke up, it hurt itself by breaking the bands and from the blood fallen on the earth, different

[420] J. G. Frazer compares Attis with Adonis and thinks that Attis was the god of vegetation, whose lover, that is mother, was Cybele. In J. G. Frazer's opinion, the character of Attis as the tree-spirit is clearly visible from the part of the rituals performed in honour of the god in March, *Canna arbor*, Frezer 1992: 439-450.

[421] For more details about different opinions in the scholarly literature about the nature and cult of the god Attis see Lancellotti 2002: 9-15.

[422] Ibid: 34.

[423] Vermaseren, de Boer 1986: 22. The name Attis presents the most frequent personal name in central Anatolia, confirmed 93 times, Roller 1994: 253.

[424] On inscriptions from the locality Çepni, the name Attis appears as the name of the monuments' dedicants, but also as the name of the one to whom the monument is dedicated. Th. Drew-Bear notices that both groups of the monuments are very similar to the monuments of Mother Goddess and associates them to the goddess's cult, Drew-Bear 1982: 64-87.

[425] Lancellotti 2002: 35.

[426] M. G. Lancellotti is of opinion that the appearance of the name Ates on grave goods implies that it was not a personal name, but perhaps the name of a god, Ibid.

[427] The monument is carved into the rock with a niche, where the statue of the Mother Goddess probably stood. The inscription tells that certain Ates dedicates the monument to king Midas. L. E. Roller pays the attention to another name present in the monument, Baba, which could have been linked to the name Atis, since it represents a Greek form of this name, Roller 1999: 69-70.

[428] As her argument for up mentioned hypothesis, L. E. Roller offers the example of Attis, the priest of the Mother Goddess's cult in Pessinus in the 2nd century BC. The author also considers the possibility that the fact that the goddess's priests carried the name Attis was a consequence of earlier practised custom where the Phrygian king was not only the ruler, but also the priest, Ibid: 112. L. E. Roller's hypothesis could be supported by the word *akenanogavos* written on Midas' monument beside the name Ates, because it could have meant a 'high priest', for more details see Vassileva 1997: 265-270

[429] Lancellotti 2002: 46.

[430] Borgeaud 2004: 34.

[431] Hepding 1903: 98-122.

[432] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* III. 58-60.

[433] Arnobius thinks that the myth about Attis is derived from the work of known theologist Timotheus the Eumolpid, who studied the origin of Cybele's cult and around 300 BC published the *hieros logos* of Pessinus, Burkert 1987: 73.

[434] Hepding 1903: 104; Borgeaud 2004: 43 and further.

[435] The androgynous Agdistis, a bisexual being, loses its divine privileges with castration. In the context of possible similarities between Mother Goddess and Agdistis in Greece, M. Meslin writes that the Phrygian version of Attis' myth implies that there are no similarities between the goddess and a hemophrodite, Meslin 1978: 765-776. M. J. Vermaseren recognizes in Agdistis the character of an evil deity from Iranian and Indian literature, Vermaseren 1966: 4.

fruits grew, among them a pomegranate. The daughter of King Sangrius took one pomegranate and by eating it, became pregnant. She gave birth to a son, Attis, who became the object of Mother Goddess's love, but also of Agdistis' adoration.[436] During Attis's wedding to King Midas' daughter, Agdistis transfers its frenzy to the guests and Attis too, who self-castrated and died.[437] Because of Agdistis' pleas to resurrect Attis, Zeus allowed Attis's hair to continue to grow and his little finger to continue moving forever after his death.[438] From then, every year, Agdistis commemorated Attis's death with festivities in Pessinus.[439] The mythical version of Attis from Lydia is known from Herodotus and Hermesianax. Herodotus describes the successful and much loved young man Attis, King Croesus's son, who went hunting for a large boar. During the hunt, the Phrygian prince Adrastus, who was a guest in Croesus' court, killed Attis by mistake. While King Croesus mourned his son, prince Adrastus killed himself on Attis' grave.[440] The story is slightly different in Hermesianax's account, who states that Attis was a priest, killed by a savage beast sent by Zeus.[441] Plutarch, however, mentions two Attises (Syrian and Arcadian), both killed by a wild boar.[442] The third version of Attis' myth is known from Diodorus Siculus, who writes about Cybele, who fell in love with the young man Attis and became pregnant by him. Her father kills Attis and an unknown god advises Cybele to bury her lover, while Phrygians erected a statue of him and started worshipping Cybele as a goddess. As can be seen, in no version of the myth is Attis mentioned as a god, but rather as a prince, that is an ordinary young man.[443] Epigraphic and archaeological monuments from Phrygia attest that nowhere is Attis mentioned as a deity, but also affirm that no iconographic representation of Attis is known originating from Asia Minor.[444] However, here it is important to mention the find of a silver statuette of a standing man with hands in a gesture of prayer, found in an Elmali tomb, together with an ivory statuette of the Mother Goddess, obviously representing the goddess' priest and, therefore, implying that priests were a significant part of the goddess's cult as early as in the late 7th or the early 6th century BC.[445] The earliest images of Attis are known from the middle of the 4th century BC, such as the image from a votive stele found in Piraeus, where, beside the inscription dedicated to Angdistis and Attis, a young man is presented sitting on a rock.[446] In the Piraeus monument, Attis is wearing Phrygian clothes – a *tunica manicata* with long sleeves, boots and a Phrygian bonnet.[447] L. E. Roller notes that Attis holds attributes like a shepherd's staff, a *pedum,* and a Pan flute, a *sirynx*, which are, in the author' opinion, taken from the iconography of the god Pan, who was venerated together with the Mother Goddess in the 5th century BC in Boeotia.[448] Since no iconographic representations of Attis are known from Asia Minor, it can be presumed that the image of the young man clothed in Oriental garments is actually a Greek creation.

Iconographic representations of Attis very quickly spread through Greece, but only in the context of a young man being the companion of the Mother Goddess. Nevertheless, epigraphic and archaeological monuments from Greece show that he was venerated as a god, unlike in Phrygia, which was perhaps derived from the different comprehension of the Mother Goddess's cult in Greece, where she was worshipped as a deity of ordinary people, mostly in the privacy of their own houses. However, the first negative connotations related to the god Attis appear in two epigrams of the poet Dioscorides, where, for the first time, the priests of the Mother Goddess are named

[436] Sangarius, angry because of Nana's pregnancy, commands that the baby is left (a part of the text in Arnobius is missing), but the baby survives on capricorn's milk (!), Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes,* V. 5-6.
[437] Ibid: V, 7.
[438] Two very important motives for Metroac religion and iconography appear in this line – pine tree and almond. In this part, Arnobius writes that Attis' bride cuts off her breasts, her father (king Midas) self-castrates and Attis throws himself on the ground and under a pine tree mutilates himself. From Attis's blood, violets sprang and from Mother'Goddess's tears an almond tree started to grow, Ibid: V, 7, 3-14.
[439] Agdistis was frequently equated with the goddess Cybele in Greece. The inscription from Sardis dated to the 4th century BC, tells about Agdistis' mysteries, *CCCA* I, num. 456. Relief from Piraeus' stele with the dedication to Angdistis and Attis, represents god sitting on the rock with syrinx and pedum, holding a vase (flower) which he gives to a goddess with polos on her head, tympanum and small vessel in her hands, *CCCA* II, num. 308. This representation is very important since it confirms that although the dedication was in honour of Agdistis, the monument is actually dedicated to Cybele. Identical iconographic scenes of a goddess holding a small vessel are known from the earliest Phrygian reliefs, which only attest the identity of a goddess from Piraeus relief as Mother Goddess and not Agdistis, Naumann 1983: 240-241.
[440] Herodotus, I. 34.2-35.
[441] Turcan 1996: 33.
[442] Lancellotti 2002: 8.
[443] L. E. Roller emphasises that although Attis is mentioned in Phrygian monuments in religious contexts, he is not mentioned as a deity, Roller 1999: 70.
[444] Both L. E. Roller and F. Naumann constate a complete absence of Attis' presentations or statues from various localities of Asia Minor, Ibid: 247; Naumann 1983: 98-99.
[445] L. E. Roller also suggests that the appearance of the Elmali priest statue (the lack of a beard) indicates that he is an eunuch, which could mean that priests eunuchs were as early as in the 7th or the 6th century BC, a part of the Mother Goddess' cult, Roller 1999: 105.
[446] *CCCA* II, num. 93; Roller 1999: 178-180.
[447] Vermaseren 1966: Pl. XI. It is interesting, though, that in the 4th century BC, this way of clothing didn't allude to the Phrygian clothes – on the pithos dated to the 7th century BC, Scythian archer wears the same bonnet as Attis in the Piraeus relief, and the whole costume of Persians appears on the red-figural vases from the 5th and the 4th century BC, Roller 1994: 250. Therefore, it can be concluded that the type of Attis's costume from the votive stele found in Piraeus, didn't have the connotation of Phrygian ethnos, but did allude to a foreigner of a person of Oriental origin.
[448] God Pan was closely connected to the cult of Mother Goddess in Greece from the early 5th century BC, Ibid: 252. Several reliefs presenting Mother goddess with god Pan are known from Greece, like two votive stele from Acropolis, a votive monument from Athens, a votive stele from Levadia and votive stele from Piraeus, *CCCA* II, num. 189, 182, 339, 432 and 279.

galloi.[449] Attis' iconography did not change during the Classical and Hellenistic period, except that on numerous terracottas the deity is shown in different situations; playing musical instruments, dancing, celebrating; in other words, everything that the Mother Goddess's devotees did whilst celebrating her.[450] L. E. Roller's opinion regarding the mentioned terracottas is that they represented votive offerings.[451] A particularly interesting iconographic type, where Attis is presented dancing, holding hands or with some musical instrument above his hand, is known as *Attis hilaris.*[452] Beside the mentioned iconographic type, other Attis' representations are known, like those where he is standing, sitting on a rock, riding a horse, walking, etc. The god was most frequently shown holding either a *pedum* or a *syrinx* and when he was presented without any attribute, he was easily recognised by his characteristic Oriental clothes.

Until 1952, in scholarly literature the prevailing opinion was that Attis' cult was known and celebrated in Rome from the 1st century.[453] Archaeological excavations led in 1952 on the area of the Metroon in the Palatine, discovered a number of terracotta figurines dating to the 1st century BC, which represent different iconographic types of Attis (playing the syrinx, riding a ram, etc.).[454] Because of its votive character, M. G. Lancellotti suggests that they represented either ex-votos or symbolic substitutes for the Metroac devotees in the context of 'giving a part of them to the deity'.[455] R. Turcan believes that most of the dedicants who offered the Attis' terracottas discovered in the Palatine were slaves and freedmen of Oriental origin, because votive figurines represented cheap objects of mass production.[456] But, whoever the dedicants of the Attis votive figurines were, their discovery attested that the god was already venerated in Magna Mater's temple from the 1st century BC. As in Greece, Attis' cult spread fast in Rome and Italy, but also in the Roman provinces, which can be followed by epigraphic and archaeological monuments dedicated to the god. Although Attis' image and cult were known in Rome from the 1st century BC, his cult was officially confirmed only from the period of Claudius' reign, when the first representations of the god with a pine cone or pine branch emerged.[457] The motifs of a pine cone and pine branch carry a clear chthonian connotation, uncharacteristic in Phrygian and Greek culture and, therefore, associated solely with the Roman context of the Attis cult.[458] Among the earliest archaeological monuments with an image of Attis and a pine tree is a statue of the god presented under a pine tree, after the act of self-castration, dated to the 2nd century.[459] However, the pine cone and pine tree are not the only motifs peculiar to Attis' iconography, but are present in the imageries of the gods Silvanus, Dionysus/Sabazius, Pan and the god of the forest, plains and fields, Faunus.[460]

Attis did not appear in the works of ancient writers until his cult was officially recognised.[461] From Claudius' reign, when imperial propaganda supported the cult of Magna Mater, but also made certain changes in the organisation of the goddess' cult in the context of the introduction of the institution of *archigallus* and permission for Roman citizens to join the goddess' cult, the celebrations in honour of the god Attis were added to the already existing festival of *Megalensia*.[462] Due to the calendar of Dionysus Philocalus from 354, celebrations in honour of the god Attis lasted from 15th to 28th March and involved following rituals performed *per day* during the festivities:[463] 1. 15th March, *Canna intrat* (the reed enters); 2. 22nd March, *Arbor intrat* (the tree enters); 3. 24th March, *Sanguinem* (blood); 4. 25th March, *Hilaria* (joy); 5. 26th March, *Requ(i)etio* (rest); 6.

[449] Dioscorides' epigrams confirm M. G. Lancellotti's and L. E. Roller's assumption that the term *Attis* was used for the priests of Mother Goddess in Pessinus, Ibid: 66. For the analysis of Dioscorides' epigrams see Gow 1960: 88-93.

[450] Vermaseren, de Boer 1986: 240-278.

[451] Roller 1999: 182.

[452] The oldest presentation of *Attis hilaris* is known from the Hellenistic vase from the 4th century BC, while later finds are represented by terracottas from Asia Minor localities Myrina and Tarsus, Vermaseren 1966: 47-48.

[453] Vermaseren 1977: 43. The archaeological excavations of P. Romanelli showed that numerous votive figurines found in the area of Metroon are probably from the period between the dedication of Metroon in 191 BC and its restoration after the fire in 111 BC, Lancellotti 2002: 77. For all discovered terracottas on Palatine see *CCCA* III, num. 13-199.

[454] Beside different iconographic types of Attis and Magna Mater statuettes, figurines in the shape of sexual organs, baskets of fruits etc. were also discovered, symbolizing fertility and implicating fertility aspect of Magna Mater and Attis cults, Roller 1999: 280.

[455] Lancellotti 2002: 79-80.

[456] Turcan 1996: 40-41.

[457] Vermaseren 1977: 113. Interestingly, ancient writers don't mention the motif of a pine-cone or branch in the connection with god Attis – Ovid just briefly mentions that after the self-castration, Attis transformed into a pine tree. R. Bell thinks that Ovid wasn't aware of the later symbolism of a pine cone as Attis's attribute and that only from Claudius' period, the motif is known in Magna Mater's and Attis representations, Bell 2007: 72-74. M. G. Lancellotti shares a similar opinion, that god Attis and motif of pine cone and pine tree are linked in Roman time and connected to the god's cult practised in Rome, Lancellotti 2002: 86.

[458] F. Cumont discusses the chthonian symbolism of a pine cone in sepulchral art, but also that it presented a symbol of resurrection and eternal life, Cumont 1942: 219, 506. M. G. Lancellotti thinks that in Attis' cult, the motif of a pine cone implies the chthonian nature of ritual practices in honour of the god, but perhaps it also symbolizes constancy, that is the durability of Attis's state of the god who dies and resurrects, Lancellotti 2002: 90, 138.

[459] *CCCA* III, num. 384. Reliefs of Attis standing beside the pine tree are known from the 3rd and the 4th century, as the scene of Magna Mater on the throne offering a pine branch from the terracotta lamp from the National Museum in Rome (now lost), Ibid: num. 236, 357, 447, 324.

[460] Dorcey 1992: 17.

[461] Bell 2007: 96. Explaining the reasons for self-castration of *galli,* Ovid mentions the story about Phrygian boy Attis who was in love with Mother Goddess, but he falls in love also with the nymph Sagaritis and out of the remorse that he betrayed Mother Goddess, he takes a stone and mutilates himself, Ovid IV.221-246.

[462] Vermaseren 1977: 113.

[463] Fishwick 1966: 193.

27th March, *Lavatio* (bathing) and 28th March, which was the day of *Initium Caiani* (or *Gaiani*), for which it is not clear whether it was related or not to the Metroac festivities.

Attis' festivities represented a symbolic display of Attis' myth (his passion for the goddess, his death and his rebirth) and started on the day of *Canna Intrat*, when the *collegium* of *cannophori* (reed-bearers)[464] led by the *archigallus*, walked in holy procession together with the priests and adherents of Magna Mater and Attis.[465] Later, the *archigallus* performed the sacrifice of a six year old bull, thus, symbolically securing the fertility of the land in the following period.[466] Nine days of fasting started on the next day, during which priests, devotees and initiates refrained from certain kinds of food.[467] Given that the following days were commemorating Attis's death and Magna Mater's sorrow for her dead companion, the believers identified with the goddess's loss and refrained from intimate relations too (*castus Matris Deum*).[468] On 22nd March, *Arbor intrat* was celebrated, when the rituals were focused on Attis' death beneath the pine tree. On that day, the *collegium* of *dendrophori* (tree-bearers) cut a pine tree just before sunset and sacrificed a ram, whose blood was shed over the roots of the tree.[469] The members of the collegium would ornate the tree with Attis' images and purple bands and carry it as a coffin, in a mock funeral procession through the city to the Metroon.[470] In the temple, priests and worshippers of Magna Mater and Attis would mourn in Greek, followed by the tympanum. The following day, 23rd March, was a day of mourning and prayer for the god, when *Salii*, priests of the god Mars, danced around the Metroon to the music of trumpets, pounding on their shields like Couretes of Magna Mater.[471] On the next day, the 24th March, or *dies sanguinis*, *galli* led by the *archigallus* would gather around the sacred tree in the goddess' temple and begin their frenetic dance around the tree, accompanied by the music of flutes and cymbals.[472] During their dance, they would flagellate themselves, beat themselves with pine cones on their bare chests, and cut themselves with vessel fragments or sharp stones, obviously impersonating the god Attis in his act of self-castration, while their blood fell over the sacred tree and the altar.[473] The culmination of the dance was the moment when the priests fell into a trance. This was when the most bizarre part of the ritual, which caused much controversy in Antiquity, was performed. Worshippers who wanted to become the goddess' priests would self-castrate themselves, thus symbolically becoming a living Attis.[474] After the act of self-castration, the lower part of their bellies was tattooed as a sign of their merging with the god.[475] After the dance, the *archigallus* would pray for the emperor's health and the well-being of the Roman state. The sacred tree was symbolically buried during the night between 24th and 25th March, followed by lamentations and prayers for the god. During the morning of 25th March, the *archigallus* would announce that the god had been saved, as his

[464] The *collegium of cannophori* (read-bearers) was an association that organized everything for the ritual on the day Canna intrat. Little is known about collegium, but the inscriptions where it is mention, confirm that women and children could be members of the collegium, Ibid: 198-199; Thomas 1984: 1531. H. Graillot presumed that the members of *collegium cannophorum* were freedmen, but the inscriptions from Ostia show that they could also belong to the upper class, Graillot 1912: 262-263; Thomas 1984: 1531.

[465] The ritual procession and cutting of the reed on the bank of river Almo was a symbolic allusion to the part of a Lydian version of Attis' myth, in which Mother Goddess found Attis as a baby on the bank of river Gallos and saved him, Borgeaud 2004: 91. R. Turcan thinks that the cutting of reed implies Attis' castration, Turcan 1996: 34. Julian compares Attis' castration with the holy harvest ('that on the third day, the sacred and arcane fertile crop of the god Gallus should be cut down'), Julian, *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*.

[466] Vermaseren 1977: 114; Graillot 1912: 118. The symbolism of the ritual *Canna intrat* can be observed on Metroac monuments, for example on the monument from Ostia of *archigallus* Marcus Modius Maximus, where Attis' head flanked with the reed is presented, *CIL* XIV, 385, but also on the bronze statue of Attis from Touluse presenting the god holding syrinx in one hand and a reed in the other, Graillot 1912: 117.

[467] H. Graillot numbers bread, pomegranate, fish, quince, pork meat and probably vine, Ibid: 120.

[468] Vermaseren 1977: 115; Turcan 1996: 44. This custom is present also in the cult of goddess Isis, as in the cult of goddess Ceres, Graillot 1912: 119.

[469] The symbolic allusion to the part in a Phrygian version of Attis myth in which the god self-castrates and falls under the pine tree, where he dies.

[470] The *collegium dendrophorum* was an association of tree bearers who were in charge of the organization of the activities on the day *Arbor intrat*. The collegium of dendrophori was recognized by a *senatus consultum* and supervised by quindecimviri and local decurions, Thomas 1984: 1529. Members of the collegium were mostly freedmen, but also senators, rich and notable persons, who dedicated expensive gifts to Metroac temples, Graillot 1912: 264-278. In Ostia three most important associations were *centonarii*, *fabri* and *dendrophori* and the *collegium denrophorum* was responsible for the restoration of the famous Metroon in Ostia, Hermasen 1981: 69 and further. Women could be members of the collegium, but in the opinion of H. Graillot and G. Th. Thomas only as honourary members, Graillot 1912: 265; Thomas 1984: 1529. Epigraphically, collegia are confirmed with 50 inscriptions from Italy, 10 inscriptions from Africa, 10 inscriptions from Danubian provinces, 10 inscriptions from three Galiae, two inscriptions from Germania Superior, one inscription in Roman Britain, one inscription in Macedonia and one inscription in the Maritime Alps, Van Haeperen 2012: 49.

[471] The relation between gods Attis and Mars is attested many times, but in the context of the festivities in honour of god Attis, the basic mutual connection is that both gods in the earliest period of their history represented deities of fertility, Vermaseren 1977: 115. Certain authors don't think that the priests of god Mars were part of Attis' celebrations from their beginning, Graillot 1912: 125; Vermaseren 1977: 115. Perhaps the cult of god Mars became connected to the Attis' festivities in the 2nd century, which would be indicated by the statue of god Mars which was found in *schola dendrophorum* in Ostia, dated in 143, *CIL* XIV, 33.

[472] *Dies Sanguinis* presented the culmination of the celebrations in honour of god Attis, because on that day the death of the deity was commemorated, Graillot 1912: 126-127; Vermaseren 1977: 115; Turcan 1996: 45.

[473] Ritual utensils that were used for *galli*'s mutilation during *dies sanguinis* are known from already mentioned funerary Lavinium relief of an Archigallus from the middle of the 2nd century.

[474] M. Beard offers the reconstruction of the March rituals, which could have encompassed the self-castration of those who wanted to become priests, thus becoming living Attis, Beard 2012: 333-334.

[475] R. Turcan writes that sometimes instead of a tattoo, a golden leaf was put on a lower part of *gallus*' belly, Turcan 1996: 45.

adherents would be too.[476] That day, known as *Hilaria*, was the day of celebrating Attis' resurrection,[477] but also the beginning of Spring. A grand procession would pass through Rome, led by the emperor and a statue of Magna Mater, with senators, noblemen and freedmen behind, clothed in different costumes. Beside statues of other deities, a statue of the god Attis was also driven in a quadriga.[478] The procession would be followed by musicians playing different instruments accompanied by the chorus of Magna Mater.[479] This was also the day when fasting ceased and lavish banquets in honour of the god Attis' rebirth were held.[480] The following day, *Requetio*, the priests and worshippers rested in readiness for the next day, *Lavatio,* which was the last day of the festivities in honour of the god Attis and when the statue of Magna Mater was ritually bathed. The religious procession, led by the goddess' priests carrying the statue of Magna Mater, would walk from the Metroon to the bank of the river Almo, where the *archigallus* plunged the goddess' statue into the water and rubbed her with ashes.[481] After the *archigallus* asked Magna Mater's statue whether it would return to Rome, the goddess' devotees would joyfully shout and throw flowers on her statue, returning it to the Metroon.[482] Unfortunately, knowledge regarding 28th March or the day when the ritual of *Initium Caiani* (or *Gaiani*) happened is quite sparse, it is only known that the celebrations took place in the Vatican area (probably near Caligula's circus), but, as I have already mentioned, it is not clear whether the rituals were related to the March festivities[483]

M. G. Lancellotti considers that festivities in honour of Attis were probably of a private character in the earliest period of their performing, only becoming public celebrations from Claudius' time.[484] This is also implied by epigraphic and archaeological attestations of the Attis cult, which are more numerous from the time of Claudius' reign in Rome, but also in the Roman provinces. The god's cult became so popular that Pausanias writes about pilgrims who visited his grave in Pessinus and paid their respects to the god.[485] The Hypogeum, with various mythological scenes including different deities and mythological couples, has, for a central scene, a winged Attis with a torch who carries Ganymede into Heaven. The Hypogeum was probably built during Claudius' reign[486] and the presented scenes symbolise a belief in life after death. M. J. Vermaseren suggests that the monument could have commemorated a young married couple who died before their time and a hope for their eternal life after death.[487] M. G. Lancellotti does not agree, because she finds the ideology that underlies the presented scene not clear enough.[488] Without entering deeper into the different opinions of scholars regarding the Hypogaeum, I will just emphasise two facts on which most authors agree: the central scene undoubtedly attests Attis' chthonian character and the presentation of Attis carrying Ganymede (the symbol of eternal youth) to Heaven, implies the god's later confirmed soteriological and eschatological character.[489]

Archaeological monuments show that during the 1st and the 2nd century, Attis' iconography stayed

[476] Firmicus Maternus writes about it in detail. M. J. Vermaseren, however, thinks that the ancient writer actually described ritual in the cult of Isis and Osiris, very similar to the rituals in Metroac cult on *dies sanguinis*, Vermaseren 1977: 116. H. Graillot writes that when the priest said: 'God is saved, as his believers will be', the worshippers responded:'We are all joyful', Graillot 1912: 131.

[477] A very interesting relief from Ostia dated to the 2nd century on which dying or already dead Attis is presented beside a pine tree, with cut off testicles among his legs, shows also a smaller figure of Attis behind dying or dead figure of the god. Obviously, the scene represents a symbolic representation of god's death and god's resurrection, *CCCA* III, num. 384.

[478] Beside the statues of Magna Mater and Attis, in the procession statues of other deities were also shown like Zeus, Hermes, Belona, Minerva, Silvanus, Dionysus, Graillot 1912: 135.

[479] How the ritual procession in the honour of Magna Mater looked like is shown on the already mentioned fresco from Pompeii.

[480] Damascius writes in the 6th century that he dreamt that he became Attis and that the Mother of the Gods celebrated *hilaria* for him, as proof that he is saved from the Underworld. Thus, Damascus confirms that on Hilaria not only that Attis' resurrection was celebrated, but the god was also saved from Hades, Vermaseren 1988: 518.

[481] As R. Turcan describes, beside the goddess's statue, her chariot and all ritual utensils were washed too, Turcan 1996: 47.

[482] Graillot 1912: 139-140.

[483] Trying to understand what the expression *initium caiani* meant, D. Fishwick elaborates that on the 28th March, Caligula triumphally came back to Rome. Making the analogy between the term *initium muneris* with which the beginning of the questor games was marked and the term *initium caiani*, D. Fishwick thinks that it is possible that on the latter day some kind of festival founded by Caligula, was celebrated. The author considers chariot races in Caligula's circus on Vatican hill. Also, D. Fishwick rejects the possibility of a hypothetical link between the day *initium caiani* and ritual of taurobolium and negates any connection between the festivities in honour of god Attis and the day *initium caiani*, Fishwick 1966: 193-194. M. J. Vermaseren presumes that the festivities held on the 28th March were taking place beside Caligula's circus and that the word *initium* stands for some kind of initiation that happened on that day, Vermaseren 1988: 517. M. R. Salzman presumes similar - that on the 28th March, initiates in the cult of Magna Mater and Attis were accepted into the cult at the Gaianum, near the Phrygianum, where Vatican sanctuary of deities was located, Salzman 1991: 167-169.

[484] Lancellotti 2002: 83. D. Fishwick thinks that the day *Canna intrat* was introduced in the period of Antoninus Pius, and the days *Hilaria* and *Requietio* during the reign or after the reign of the same emperor, Fishwick 1966: 202.

[485] Pausanias, I. 4.5.

[486] *CCCA* III, num. 344. The Hypogeum built near Porta Maggiore, was discovered after the First World War and the majority of scholars date it to the period of Claudius' reign, unlike F. L. Bastet who dates it to the 20 AD. The hypogeum was actually a quadrangular room (3,5x3,62m), which continues into a long room divided into three aisles by pillars with an apse at the end. The vaults, pillars and the apse were fresco painted. Four panels with the figure of *Attis tristis* surrounded the main scene of winged Attis carrying Ganymede to the Heaven, while in the northern aisle a representation of the condemnation of Marsyas is presented, with possibly Cybele as Marsyas' mother, Ibid.

[487] Vermaseren 1977: 55-56.

[488] Lancellotti 2002: 80.

[489] Ganymede is usually taken to Heaven by Zeus or the eagle, Cumont 1942: 28, 97. The choice of god Attis as the figure who will carry Ganymede to Heaven among the immortals can perhaps be explained by Attis' undying character described in the mythological tradition of the deity.

The statue of a Reclining Attis from Ostia
(https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio4/1/1-3.htm)

unchanged, with the exception of a marble statue of a Reclining Attis from Ostia, probably dated to the period of Antoninus Pius.[490] The Reclining Attis shows the god as a naked hermaphrodite, holding a pedum, wheat, pine-branches and a pomegranate, with solar and lunar symbols as allusions to the god's aspects.[491] During the reign of the Antonine dynasty, representations of a castrated Attis (*Attis mutilans*) and a dying Attis (*Attis moriens*) appeared.[492] Also, one particular type of the god's iconography was very frequently presented on funerary monuments from Italy, the region of the Rhine and Dalmatia. This type of the god's iconographic presentations, known as funerary Attis (*Attis funerarius, Attis tristis*) shows the god standing, with crossed legs, sometimes with his head down or leant on one hand, with or without various attributes (*pedum*, torch) in his hands. Because of numerous known representations of

[490] The building of Metroon in Ostia is connected to the period of Hadrian or perhaps Antoninus Pius. Inside the Metroon, a shrine dedicated to the god Attis was discovered (*Attideum*), which was probably constructed at the same time (implied with the majority of dedications dated to the reign of Antoninus Pius), Vermaseren 1977: 61-63.

[491] The marble sculpture of Reclining Attis was found in the southern porticus of the Campus of Magna Mater, but was probably placed in *Attideum.* The statue represents a feminized image of the god Attis reclining on a rock, almost nude (with a cloak around his neck and mantle covering his legs. He wears a crown made of fruits and five rays, a Phrygian cap and a crescent with two ears of corn. In his hands, Attis holds a pedum and a bunch of ears of corn, pine cones and a pomegranate. He is leant on a mask of a river god Sangarius, while on the base of the statue is an inscription that the statue is dedicated by Gaius Cartilius Euplus, *CIL* XIV, 38; *CCCA* III, num. 394; Rieger 2004: 140-141, Abb. 107, 108a-108c. M. J. Vermaseren thinks that the sculpture of Reclining Attis from Ostia represents a resurrected god, implied by the sun rays on his head and the motif of the crescent, Vermaseren 1966: 36. For all the monuments and the architecture of Magna Mater's temple in Ostia see Rieger 2004.

[492] Here I ought to mention a very interesting bronze statuette of the god Attis found in locality Muć (Andetrium) in province Dalmatia, which presents kneeling Attis with raised right hand in which the god held a knife or a stone, with which he castrated himself, Vermaseren 1977: 142; Medini 1981: 16, 538, num. 73; Vilogorac 2008: 105-111; The representations of *Attis mutilans* and *Attis moriens* encompass: the terracotta from Tarsus where Attis holds a knife in his hand, relief from Burnum where the god is lying under the pine tree, marble statue from Ostia in which Attis is presented holding a syrinx and pedum and small statuette from Brindisi which shows the god lying under the pine tree, Vermaseren 1966: 34-36. In the same context, a very interesting scene is known from the fresco in Pompeii, where Attis with his legs crossed, stands leaning on the tree, with pedum in his left hand and a sickle in his right hand, Vermaseren 1977: 66. Lying Attis after self-castration is also shown on the coins of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus from Cyzicus, Vermaseren 1966: 32-37. M. J. Vermaseren thinks that dead Attis is shown on marble relief from Rome, on which the god is presented dressed with wide open legs on the rock, with a tiara on his head. His eyes are closed and both arms are raised above his head, which with the motionless body implies that the deity has passed away, Ibid: 38. A presentation of dying Attis with a pine cone in his left hand is known from the lid of a stone box in which the vires of a Gallus were deposited, Coombe, Grew, Hayward, Henig 2015: 52-54, num. 87, pls. 7, 48.

this iconographic type on funerary monuments from the Central Balkans, I will later elaborate in detail its origin, importance and different interpretations, but here I will just summarise that *Attis tristis'* image symbolised the sorrow and sadness for the deceased, but also the hope for the deceased's resurrection and eternal life after death. This iconographic type in Central Balkan funerary monuments sometimes blends with another type of the god's representations, the winged Attis, which is most frequently presented in bronze statuettes, with the exception of the marble statues from Cyzicus.[493] From the 3rd century, continuing into the 4th century, Attis became a solar and celestial deity.[494] This symbolism was derived from contemporary philosophical and religious teachings, in which the need to make Attis more familiar to most people prevailed. Solar motifs like the sun's rays around the god's cap or stars presented on the cap's edge (sometimes the motif of a crescent, although this was more an allusion to the syncretism with the god Mēn), began to appear in Attis' iconography.[495] It is believed that the astral characteristics of the god were the product of the 2nd century Gnostic sect of Naassenes and their beliefs, which we know from Hippolytus' Hymns to Attis[496](although the image of Attis with a star on the top of his cap is known from Pessinus' coins dated to the 1st century BC, which could imply that as early as that time, the god was considered an astral deity).[497] The Naassenes believed that Attis was a divine principle who was buried in the body in the grave. Therefore it must free itself of the material world to go to Heaven, where it will be free.[498] Hippolytus also states that Naassenes sang hymns to the god Attis, because they believed that he was the great 'All' and the minister of the stars.[499] J. Medini believes that earlier recognition in the Roman culture of Attis as a celestial deity helped Naassenes to interpret the god as the pastor of the stars (particularly bearing in mind Pythagoreans' doctrines from the 4th century BC about soul's life between gods and stars). In J. Medini's opinion, it was quite logical for the Gnostic sect to equate the souls of the dead with stars and proclaim Attis as their guardian.[500] Therefore, it is no wonder that in the 3rd and the 4th century, Attis was a *psychopompos*, who led the souls of the deceased to their final resting place. However, Attis' symbolism as a celestial god cannot be attributed only to the Naassenes; Julian, in his 'Hymn to the Mother of Gods', writes that Magna Mater placed a starry cap on the head of the god Attis and made him a ruler of Heaven.[501] The god is a charioteer of Magna Mater and installs cosmic order in the chaos caused by Agdistis.[502] Julian's friend, the writer Sallustius, also believed that Attis was the creator of all things and that the Mother of the Gods gave him celestial powers, symbolised in his starry hat.[503] This symbolism of Attis being the emperor of the sky is presented in a votive monument of the senator and augur Lucius Cornelius Scipio Orfitus, where, on the top of Attis' hat, an eagle, ruler of the sky, is shown.[504] The same symbolism to Magna Mater's paredros is given on a well-known silver plate from Parabiago, where he and the goddess are presented riding in a quadriga above Earth.[505] Finally, the solar and lunar symbolism attributed to Attis is indirectly attested by Christian authors, since Arnobius disputes that Attis is the name of the Sun (Arnobius states that Attis is the name of a semivir from Phrygia), while Macrobius writes that Attis is just one name, beside the names Adonis, Osiris and Horus, for the

[493] The marble statue of Attis from probably Metroac temple in Cyzicus, represents the god with wings. Two more similar marble statues of Attis originated from Asia Minor are known, Vermaseren 1966: 46. For further see Vermaseren, de Boar 1986: 30, num 145-150, 34-35, num. 264-278.

[494] R. Turcan and M. G. Lancellotti think that implications to Attis as a solar and celestial deity can be observed in Attideum in Ostia, in the already mentioned statue of Reclining Attis with sun rays and crescent on his head, Turcan 1996: 68; Lancellotti 2002: 116. R. Turcan, however, moves forward the possible chronological beginning of Attis' worship as a celestial god, to the 1st century BC, Turcan 1996a: 387-405.

[495] Astral motives are present in Attis' iconography from the 2nd century – on the coins of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, Attis' tunica and anaxarydes are ornamented with stars, while a bronze statuette of Attis in the private collection shows god with a tiara on which a star is presented, Vermaseren 1966: 33, 50-51. M. G. Lancellotti mentions Attis terracotta from Cyprus, decorated with a line of rosettes, Lancellotti 2002: 117.

[496] Hippolytus was a Roman bishop and one of the important early Christian writers, with his significant work *Philosophumena*, in which the author discusses against the Gnostic sects and their beliefs. Thankfully to Hippolytus, the ideas of Naassenes about the astral interpretation of god Attis, are known to us today, Lancellotti 2002: 119-125.

[497] Graillot 1912: 212, ft. 5.

[498] Medini 1981: 148. M. G. Lancellotti writes that Naassenes focused on two aspects of the god Attis: his cosmic qualities and the part about his castration, which for them presents a symbol of the divine principle, Lancellotti 2002: 124-125. Naassenes believed that Attis is constantly active and carries the entire cosmos by his circular motion, Alvar 2008: 36, ft. 31.

[499] Turcan 1996: 68.

[500] Medini 1981: 148-153.

[501] Julian writes that because of his beauty, Attis was beloved by the mother of the gods who 'had committed all things to his charge', Julian, *Hymn to the Mother of the gods.*

[502] Alvar 2008: 140-141.

[503] Sallustius, *On the Gods and the Cosmos.* Since Sallustius uses metaphors to describe that Attis is the creator of All and the one who by self-castration achieved to merge with the gods, H. Graillot and R. Turcan think that both Julian and Sallustius in a way pointed to god Attis as the symbol of the victory over death, that is a symbol of eternal life, Graillot 1912: 539-541; Turcan 1996: 72-73.

[504] The monument is dated to 295 AD. *CIL* VI, 30782; *CCCA* III, num. 358.

[505] The silver plate from Parabiago was found within the Roman necropolis on the locality Parabiago in the vicinity of Milan in 1907. year. On the plate, probably dating from the 4th – 5th century, quite complex iconography is presented, with the central scene of Magna Mater and Attis in quadriga pulled by lions, followed by three Corybantes. On the right side, a naked youth holding a Zodiac ring is shown, with Aion inside, while at the top of the plate Sol with Phosphorus and Luna with Hespera, are presented in their chariots. At the bottom of the plate, four Erotes personifying seasons, with Neptune, Thetis and Tellus, are shown, Turcan 1996: 72-73; Alvar 2008: 140; Cohen 2014: 17-19. M. J. Vermaseren dates the Parabiago plate to the 2nd century, Vermaseren 1966: 27-30.

The Parabiago Plate
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Patera_di_Parabiago._Ph_Ivan_Stesso.jpg)

names of the Sun god.[506] The solar character of the god is symbolically represented in his images in a quadriga (where he is presented as the Sun god), in the images where he rides a lion, but also in his representations with sun-rays around his head.[507] Because of his astral symbolism, Attis was not only syncretised with the god Mithras, but also with Asia Minor's moon god Mēn, on the 4th century epigraphic monuments, under the name *Menotiranus*.[508] In the 6th century, Neoplatonists still mentioned Attis as a lunar deity.[509] Given Attis was considered the 'father and the leader' of the *galli*, the cult of the god was attacked by Christian authors as the cult of Magna Mater and, during the second half of the 4th century, his monuments, particularly those with the image of *Attis tristis*, were vandalised by Christians.[510]

[506] In the solar context of Attis, his syncretistic presentations with god Mithras, known from the 1st century on the territory of Pantikapaion (today's Kerch) and southern part of Crimea are very interesting, Kobylina 1976: 9 and further.

[507] Graillot 1912: 208-210. Scenes of Magna Mater and Attis in quadriga pulled by lions are known from earlier mentioned *contorniates* issued in the 4th century. Marble statue from Ostia, two terracottas and bronze statuettes present god Attis riding a lion, Vermaseren, de Boer 1986: 36, num. 297-301.

[508] Graillot 1912: 208-210; Turcan 1996: 68. All the inscriptions dedicated to *Attis Menotyrannus* date to the 4th century and the dedicants are the priests of Metroac cult but also the priests of different deities like Hecate, Libera, Sol, Persephone and Mithras, *CMRDM* III: 97-98.

[509] Turcan 1996: 74.

[510] In his discussion about the symbolism of *Attis tristis* image on the funerary monuments and its damaging by the Christians, J. Medini argues his hypothesis that iconographic motif represented quite a threat for them, because it was a soteriological and eschatological symbol of an old religion deeply rooted in the Roman world, as Metroac religion was, upon which the Christians looked like a serious menace, Medini 1981: 162.

2.2 The archaeological monuments of Attis in the Central Balkans

The cult of god Attis enjoyed considerable popularity in the Central Balkan provinces, judging by the number of his images on the funerary monuments, but is not confirmed either epigraphically or with marble sculptures, which is unlike the situation in neighbouring provinces like Pannonia Inferior, Dalmatia and Thrace. The fact that Attis is mostly presented in funerary monuments allows us not only to enter deeper into the different questions of his iconography and the dedicants' hypothetical knowledge of the cult's theology, but also enables us to analyse and interpret various iconographic representations of the god. More than 50 monuments, mostly localised in the western parts of the Central Balkan territory are known to contain the image of *Attis tristis*, while a smaller number of monuments with the same motif is confirmed in Viminacium. On the majority of the monuments, the god Attis is presented in his canonical image of the funerary Attis,[511] attested on grave monuments from Gallia, Germania, Italy, Spain, Britain[512] and the Danubian provinces - the deity is shown as a young beardless man, with one arm bent at the elbow and parallel to his waist, with the elbow of other arm leant on it. His head is slightly inclined to one side or bowed and his legs are crossed. The young man wears a Phrygian hat on his head and he is dressed in a pleated *tunica manicata* with long sleeves, a cloak (sometimes with a fibula) and close-fitting trousers – *anaxyrides*, typically worn by Persians, Scythians and mythical figures from the Orient (Trojans, Orpheus, etc.). On his feet, he has high laced up shoes (sometimes even to the middle of his lower legs). The most frequent attribute with which the god is presented is a *pedum*, although he can be also found holding a torch. What is, however, characteristic for his presentations on Central Balkan funerary monuments are the positions of the pedum and torch – they are turned downwards so that the curved top of the *pedum* or the torch's flame are presented beside his feet. Analysing the iconography of each monument, slight alterations can be noticed – sometimes the god is not resting his head on his hand, sometimes his hat has longer ends, sometimes the palm of his hand is turned towards the viewer, etc. As will be shown, those alterations mostly depended on the knowledge and skill of the stonemason.

The images of *Attis tristis* are almost always presented on funerary monuments of the *cippus* type, with a height of around one metre or more.[513] The image is always presented twice on the monument – in the centre of both its lateral sides. Mapping of monuments with *Attis tristis* images in the western parts of the Central Balkans has shown that there were two main areas of its concentration – the region of Polimlje (in and around the basin of the river Lim) and the region of Podrinje (in and around the basin of the river Drina). The majority of the monuments with the figure of *Attis tristis* were discovered in the territory extending from the locality of Gorobilje (in the vicinity of the region of Visibabe) to the locality of Požega.

The discussion about the funerary monuments with *Attis tristis* images from the Central Balkans and their -interpretation is complicated for several reasons. The first reason is the fact that some of the monuments recorded at the beginning of the 20th century by the first researches, have either been destroyed or they have disappeared, so the only data about them is the old records and short descriptions, usually without a drawing or photo. Other problems are connected to the peculiar syncretism between the god Attis and the winged genius of death or the gods Mithras, Silvanus and Dionysus/Liber, attested in some parts of the Central Balkans. That problem is further complicated by different dilemmas, like, for example, the question as to whether images of the winged genius of death represent him or are they, in fact, the images of the genius of the god Attis, since representations of the Phrygian god with wings are not unknown in the Roman Empire. On monuments where Attis is presented without an attribute, it is quite difficult to be certain whether we are dealing with his image or with the image of some other mythological figure. On most of the monuments with the figure of *Attis tristis,* there is no inscription or additional iconographical motifs, which could, perhaps, imply the degree of the deceased's knowledge of Metroac theology and mythology. Therefore, in these cases, we cannot determine whether the dedicant was a believer and belonged to the Metroac cult or he/she just believed in the obvious symbolism of the *Attis tristis* image. Finally, the dedicants could be of different origin – they could be of Asia Minor or Greek origin, but they could be also Romanised indigenous residents, who respected the Metroac cult as part of the official ideology of the Roman state and, thus, honoured the

[511] Hepding 1903: 202; Graillot 1912: 236 and further.

[512] *Attis tristis'* image is less often seen on the funerary monuments from other Roman provinces like for example Noricum, Gallia, Spain etc. In Britain, the image of mourning Attis is known from the grave stones in the fortress of Legio XX Valeria Victrix at Deva, Henig 2004: 7-8, num. 15 (Attis leaning on a torch), num. 16 (Attis with a pedum), num. 17-19.

[513] Funerary monument of *cippus* type most frequently has a profiled field on the front and lateral sides. Inside the front profiled field, there is an inscription, with usually vegetable or figural ornaments around the field. Inside the lateral profiled fields was relief presentation, with also vegetable or other motives around the fields. Cippi were put above the tomb with incinerated deceased or on the area of a family tomb (type *area maceria cincta*). The majority of the authors think that this type of monuments spread from northern Italy to Salona, which is the first centre from where cippi were further transferred to the areas of Podrinje and Polimlje. The second centre of cippi distribution was Sremska Mitrovica (Sirmijum). Beside more frequent used stele, cippi were present on the territory of province Dalmatia from the 1st century, Зотовић 1995: 24-29.

Roman emperor. Bearing this in mind and the fact that these are questions that form only a small part of the complex analysis of monuments with an image of *Attis tristis,* I will carefully tread the path of first presenting monuments with the *Attis tristis* image and then attempt to offer an interpretation in those cases that allow it.

Although authors before J. Medini have recorded monuments with the figure of *Attis tristis*, he was the first to differentiate between the four basic iconographical types of this kind of funerary monument in the province of Dalmatia. In my iconographic analysis of all so-far known monuments, I generally agree with J. Medini's typology,[514] just with some revisions in the context of new archaeological finds and interpretations, but also in the context of the area in question, since J. Medini's typology did not include several funerary monuments of unknown provenience and all funerary monuments from Viminacium. The first iconographic type of *Attis tristis* image would include the god's representation without any attribute.[515] The deity is presented as described above, but on some monuments he is holding the palm of his hand beside his face, turned outward to the viewer. This type of presentations is known from Municipium S (Komini), but also the site of Kremna. Iconographic type of *Attis tristis* image without any attribute is also the earliest known on the Central Balkans territory, probably spread from the military camp of Tilurium (today Gardun) in Dalmatia, where the image was attested on a stele belonging to the soldiers of the legion VII Claudia.[516] The soldiers of legion VII Claudia were dedicants not only of the stele discovered in Tilurium, but also in Salona, dated to the first three decades of the 1st century.[517] However, the images of *Attis tristis* do not occupy the whole surface of the fields on the Tilirium monument, but only the two lower fields, which represents the argument for J. Medini to presume that in some moment, but not before the end of the 1st century, the motif of *Attis tristis* was transferred from the lower fields of military stelae to the lateral sides of funerary monuments.[518] Since the funerary monuments with the first iconographic type of *Attis tristis* are also attested in the localities from western Dalmatia (like Presjek, Burnum, etc.), where the main centre of cultural and artistic influence was Salona, it can be presumed that the first type of *Attis tristis* image in which the god is presented without attributes, spread from Salona to the territory of eastern Dalmatia.[519] The motif of *Attis tristis* ceased to appear on the funerary monuments of western Dalmatia in the second half of the 1st century, reappearing after one century, but not in its original form (where the god is shown without an attribute), but as the second iconographic type of *Attis tristis* images, with the attribute of a *pedum*.[520] The disappearance of the motif from Tilurium and Salone stelae from the second half of the 1st century was probably connected with the cessation of the workshops, when the legion VII Claudia was transferred to Viminacium, between 63 and 66.[521]

The second iconographic type of the *Attis tristis* image is recognised by the presence of a *pedum*, which the deity holds or leans on. The *pedum* is, however, turned downwards. Since most funerary monuments contain this iconographic type of *Attis tristis* image, I will focus only on particular monuments, which are helpful in obtaining a more accurate picture regarding the symbolism that the mentioned iconography carried. However, that kind of analysis cannot be performed on those monuments where certain alternative iconographic details are present, probably due to the poor knowledge or lack of skill of the stonemason. On a funerary cippus from the locality of Grebnica, the *pedum* has a spiral form and looks richer than the usual shepherd's staff. The *pedum* in the *Attis tristis* image on the cippus from Kriva reka is in the shape of a crook (cat. 21). The length of shepherd's staff can vary on the representation, from short ones, as in the cippus from Komini, to an elongated *pedum,* such as that on the cippus from Viminacium. Also, the position of Attis leaning on the staff is differently represented on the monuments – sometimes the god leans his elbow on the

[514] Medini 1981: 112- 181.

[515] I didn't include the monuments on which, due to now not recognizable image of Attis, isn't possible to say with certainty whether the attribute (and which attribute) was present or not.

[516] J. Medini dates Tilurium stele before 42, when the legion stationed in Tilurium gets the official name *Claudia pia fidelis*, Medini 1981: 29.

[517] Military stele from Tilurium present monuments of impressive dimensions (sometimes over 2m height), with an inscription field and motif of *Porta inferi*. The surface of Porta inferi is divided into four fields – two upper smaller ones and two lower bigger ones. The image of god *Attis tristis* is presented inside two bigger lower fields, Medini 1981: 29. H. Hofmann thought that the *Porta inferi* motif is of Asia Minor origin, but N. Cambi doesn't agree and thinks that the motif of Hades' doors on Tilurium stele is of Roman origin, presenting a monumental funerary whole, Ibid: 45-46, ft. 25; Cambi 1991: 61-72.

[518] J. Medini explains that in the middle of the 1st century, funerary cippi with the motif of *Porta inferi* appear in Dalmatia, but without the image of *Attis tristis.* The author elaborates that the appearance of this iconographic image on cippi implies that the *cippus* type of funerary monuments slowly copies the iconography from funerary stele and that, in that context, it is not surprising that the motif of *Attis tristis* known from military stele was transferred to the funerary monuments of *cippus* type, Medini 1981: 36.

[519] The motif of *Attis tristis* starts to spread from the first half of the 1st century from Aquileia to the coastal parts of Dalmatia, with the centre in Salona. From Salona, it is further transferred to the eastern and southern areas of Dalmatia and Moesia Superior, Ibid; Зотовић 1995: 98.

[520] The image of *Attis tristis* is known from nine funerary monuments from several localities, mainly Garun, Pula and Salona, but also on the frieze from Burnum, a plate from Lepur or statues from Pula and Salona. For further, Miletić, Pavlić, Šćukanec Rezniček, Vilogorac Brčić 2014: 129-144.

[521] J. Medini thinks that the motif of *Attis tristis* isn't any longer present on the monuments from Tilurium and Salona from the second half of the 1st century because the legion VII Claudia left for Viminacium, Medini 1981: 32. The arrival of legion VII Claudia to Viminacium is dated between 63 and 67, Mirković 1968: 32. In that light, it can be presumed that the last known presentations of *Attis tristis* on Tilurium and Salona stelae, can be dated before 63.

pedum, he can hold the top of the staff with one hand or he can be leaning on the staff with both hands. On monuments like the cippi from the village of Visibaba or on the images of *Attis tristis* from Kremna, the figure of the god is not leaning with his body on the pedum, but just holding it with one hand. These alternatives show that the pedum was no longer functioning as a support, but as a motif *par excellence* of *Attis tristis.*

In the third iconographic type of *Attis tristis*' image on funerary cippi, the god is shown with a torch. His iconography is the same, but the god is no longer supporting his body on a pedum, but on a downward turned torch. This iconographic type of the god's image is attested on monuments from the localities of Karan (cat. 16-18), Otanj (cat. 24), Pljevlja (cat. 25), Klašnik (cat. 42) and Štitarevo Donje (cat. 43, 44), while on a monument from Pljevlja we see the variation of this iconographic type: the figure of *Attis tristis* on the monument's left lateral side holds the torch downward, while the figure of *Attis tristis* presented on monument's right lateral side holds the torch being held up. The attribute of the torch is typical for the winged genius of death, who is shown on funerary cippi from Pljevlja (cat. 25) and Rogatica (cat. 45).[522] However, the attribute of the torch is characteristic in the iconography of Hesperus, Phosphorus, the winged Eros/Cupid and, particularly, Mithras' dadophors. The fact that funerary monuments with the image of *Attis tristis* holding a downward turned torch appear in the same areas where monuments with the *Attis tristis* figure holding a downward turned pedum are known, implies that both representations existed in the same period, in the areas where they were discovered.[523]

Here, a particular type of cippus form should be mentioned, confirmed with several monuments in the Central Balkans territory, which is in the shape of a pyramid, with a flat top and the lower part in the form of a parallelepiped. These funerary monuments are anepigraphic and ornamented with different motifs and scenes. One monument of this type was found in the locality of Karan in the vicinity of Užice (cat. 18), where the existence of a large Antique necropolis was confirmed, dating from the 2nd to the 4th century. The monument's lower part is ornamented on three sides with the following scenes: on the left side a rider on a horse is presented, on the monument's front side there is a scene of a funeral banquet, while on the right side of the monument, a man sitting beside a tripod with a vessel and an oval object (perhaps bread?) is shown. The upper pyramidal part of the monument is also decorated on three sides – two figures of naked winged boys leant with one hand on pedum, are presented on lateral sides, with a motif of a dolphin under the figures, while on the front side a kantharos with grapewine is presented.[524] It is quite clear that the figures of naked winged boys present a syncretistic type of *Attis tristis* figure and genius of death – the posture belongs to the figure of *Attis tristis,* as the attribute of pedum, while the appearance of a naked winged boy belongs to the iconography of the winged genius of death. On the majority of representations of genius of death, the attribute of a torch is presented in their hands and not a pedum.[525] This type of funerary monuments is known from the nearby localities of Požega and Otanj, while just the pyramidal parts of the funerary monuments are attested in nearby Prilipac, Skelani and Nova Varoš.

The fourth iconographic type of *Attis tristis* presentations on funerary cippi comprises only scenes from two monuments found in the localities of Municipium S, today's Komini and Crvice. On a funerary cippus from Komini (cat. 30), on one lateral side, the god Attis is presented without an attribute, while on the other lateral side a figure looking similar to Attis is shown, with exposed genitals. No other iconographical motifs are present, which could imply that here we have different presentations of Attis or that the god is presented on one side of the monument, while on the other side some other deity is shown.[526] Although J. Medini considered only the possibility of some unknown indigenous deity being presented on one of the lateral sides of the Komini monument, considering the population of Municipium S and its high degree of Romanisation, with members of the upper class being in constant contact with Salona, I suggest that on the lateral side of the Komini monument the god Attis is presented with displayed genitals, similar to how he was presented in monuments from other Roman provinces. The image of *Attis tristis* from Crvica's cippus presents the god with a downward turned *pedum* in his left hand and an elongated object in his right hand (37). Although J. Medini suggests that the deity is holding a key or a mirror, I am more inclined towards a pine-cone, which is a usual and expected motif in Attis' iconography.

Few authors have thus far discussed the question of the possible workshops in which funerary monuments with *Attis tristis* image were produced, or their location.[527] If we start from the localities furthest east, the area of Višegrad contains all four iconographic types of the *Attis tristis* image. However, the monuments from the Višegrad area differentiate mutually with various

[522] Mirković 2013: 100, num. 5; Мандић 2015: 172-173, num. 7, 8, 9.
[523] Којић 1963: 228-229.
[524] Вулић 1933: 76, num. 216; Петровић 1986: 27, num. 20; Мандић 2015: 196-197, num. 9.
[525] On so-far known representations of winged genii of death on funerary monuments from the areas of Podrinje, Polimlje and Viminacium, they are presented as naked boys leant on a torch, Зотовић 1969: 438.
[526] J. Medini thinks that on the other side of Komini cippus, an indigenous deity of fertility is presented together with god Attis, Medini 1981: 180.
[527] Medini 1981: 50-61; Зотовић 1995: 89-90.

elements (different vegetable ornaments, dissimilar dimensions of the monuments, etc.), therefore, it is unlikely that all so-far known monuments with the motif of *Attis tristis* were produced in one workshop. The funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* figure attested in the Višegrad area were produced in several different workshops. However, it is possible that travelling stonemasons made some of the monuments where the mentioned alterations are present or that some of the monuments were produced in some other centre (like Salona, Municipium Malvesatium or Domavia) and then transported to their final destination in the Višegrad area.[528] That would also apply to other monuments with an *Attis tristis* image attested in the western parts of the Central Balkans, as can be affirmed in the examples of the cippus from Kremna and the cippus from Donje Štitarevo, which are made from limestone of rather bad quality. On both monuments, Attis is presented holding his palm beside his face (the palm is turned to the viewer) and the ornaments of rosettes on the monument are executed in the same manner. All these details imply that both cippi were produced in the same workshop.[529]

The cippi from the wider territory of Bajina Bašta could probably be attributed to the workshop which was situated in Municipium Malvesatium, one of the main mining centres in the antiquity in this area, today's Skelani in Republika Srpska (one of the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina).[530] Like the workshop in Domavia, the workshop situated in Municipium Malvesatium was partly under the iconographic and stylistic influences of Pannonia Inferior. Possible workshops can be presumed in the areas of Municipium S that is Komini and Kolovrat. J. Medini suggests that funerary monuments with a bust of the deceased on their front face and the image of *Attis tristis* with a downward tuned torch on their lateral sides, were produced in one wokshop, unlike the larger cippi with the figures of *Attis tristis* without an attribute.[531] R. Zotović thinks that the settlement in Municipium S (Komini) was older than the nearby settlement in Kolovrat, therefore, it is logical that a workshop in Komini would have begun earlier with the production of cippi with an *Attis tristis* image than a workshop in Kolovrat, most probably in the second quarter of the 2nd century.[532]

On the wider territory of Užice and Požega, at least two workshops also existed, but they cannot be located more precisely.[533] One was perhaps situated in today's Tubići or in the Kosjerić area, which are, even today, well known for their stonemasons and stonemason's workshops. Although, in this area only the first two iconographic types of *Attis tristis* image appeared on funerary cippi, the iconography is very similar. Among them, only a group of monuments from the village of Visibaba should be singled out, because of its rich ornamentation in the shape of different vegetable motifs.

Funerary cippi with the figure of *Attis tristis* are dated from the 2nd to the beginning of the 4th century. A more precise dating is possible for those monuments where certain iconographic motifs are present or where epigraphic-onomastic analyses allows it. In that context, the monuments from the area of Visibaba are closely dated to the second half that is the third quarter of the 2nd century, mostly because of the fact that on all three monuments with an *Attis tristis* image the decuriones of Municipium Malvesatium are mentioned.[534] Decuriones are often mentioned on the inscriptions present on cippi with an *Attis tristis* image and, in most cases, they bear the gentilicium *Aurelius,* which indicates that they were Romanised indigenous residents. The latest funerary monument with the image of *Attis tristis* from the western parts of the Central Balkans is probably the monument discovered in the vicinity of Pljevlja, dated to the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century, where the god is presented holding a torch. This iconography, bearing in mind the attested monuments of the god Mithras in the same area, clearly points to the contamination of Attis' iconography with the imagery of Mithras' dadophors.

Regarding funerary monuments with the image of *Attis tristis* discovered in Viminacium and its surroundings, five monuments have been attested. Two monuments were certainly cippi, one monument represented a sarcophagus, while two monuments, of which one is unfortunately lost, are stelae. The preserved funerary stele, found at the locality of Drmno near Požarevac in the territory of Viminacium, includes two images of *Attis tristis,* each presented in a separate niche, divided with a column (cat. 54). The figures of *Attis tristis* on the monument present the second iconographic type of the god's image, a deity with a *pedum*. The second monument recorded as a stele, unfortunately lost, had similar iconography, judging by the available data (cat.

[528] Medini 1981: 55.
[529] R. Zotović thinks that one workshop existed in the locality Kremna, near Užice, Зотовић 1995: 90.
[530] Kojić 1961: 3; Зотовић 1995: 89.
[531] Medini 1981: 59.
[532] Зотовић 1995: 89.
[533] On the localities Blaškovina and Kremna, the remains of unfinished funerary cippi were found, so if this fact would be taken into the consideration for assuming the locations of possible workshops in that area, they would be probably situated in the mentioned two localities, Зотовић 1995: 89-90.
[534] On all three funerary monuments, the second iconographic type of *Attis tristis* image is presented, that is the god with a pedum. Since the deceased were the members of the city government directly appointed from the centre of the province, Salona, it is possible that by this way the motif of *Attis tristis* was transferred to the eastern part of the province Municipium Malvesatium, Medini 1981: 58.

55).[535] Two fragments of a sarcophagus with images of *Attis tristis*, also unfortunately lost, were found in Kostolac (cat. 58). The traces of an inscription field are recognisable and on each fragment, a figure of the god holding a crooked *pedum* was presented. While Attis' image on one sarcophagus fragment was clothed and held a crooked pedum in his left hand, Attis' figure on the second sarcophagus fragment was naked, without even his Phrygian hat on his head and held a raised crooked pedum in his right hand. Also, an interesting detail is the attribute of a syrinx, which is presented in both images of *Attis tristis*. Naked representations of Attis are not uncommon, although they are not overly frequent. The god is also presented without his Phrygian hat on the sarcophagus fragment, for which an analogy exists in an *Attis tristis* image from the front side of a sarcophagus found in Zenum (Taurunum).[536] Scenes of Attis holding raised pedum are even rarer and the closest iconographic analogy is known in Attis' image from a Carnuntum monument, dated to the 3rd century, where the god is also presented with a raised *pedum*.[537] The images of Attis on sarcophagi usually present only his face (Attis' masks), a full figure of *Attis tristis* or Attis in the hunt, accompanied by Magna Mater, *archigallus* etc.[538] However, what is unique in the fragment of the Kostolac sarcophagus is the attribute of a syrinx in the hands of the *Attis tristis* figure. The representations of a standing god with a syrinx in one hand and a *pedum* in the other hand are most frequent on Hellenistic terracottas, although they can be encountered on reliefs and bronze statues from the Roman period.[539] Since a terracotta of the probable god Attis was also found on the territory of Viminacium, perhaps it can be presumed that the stonemason of the sarcophagus could have found inspiration for presenting the god with a syrinx in the terracotta's iconography. On the basis of the analogy with other monuments with an *Attis tristis* image from Viminacium, we would suggest the 2nd century as a probable period when the sarcophagus with an *Attis tristis* motif was produced.

A particularly interesting example of a funerary monument with an *Attis tristis* figure, found in Kostolac, is the monument of Marcus Antonius Fabianus, who was a procurator of the Pannonian silver mines (cat. 52).[540] His successful career lasted throughout the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius and can be followed through his promotions and titles: *procurator XL Galliarum et portus*, potom *procurator argentariarum Pannonicarum* and finally, *conductor portori Illyrici*.[541] Unlike the procurators of the mining areas in Polimlje and in Kosmaj, who were imperial freedmen, Marcus Antonius Fabianus was a knight.[542] He was in charge of the exploitation of silver in Pannonia, in the period before the unification of the mining districts of Pannonia and Dalmatia. Adding the fact that imperial managers of silver mines of particular provinces appeared only at the end of the first half of the 2nd century, the time frame for the dating of Marcus Antonius Fabianus' funerary monument can be narrowed down to between 150 and 180. For the other three monuments from Viminacium with an *Attis tristis* image, a dating to the 2nd or 3rd century can be suggested.

Single examples of funerary monuments with the image of *Attis tristis* are known from the locality of Suvodol, where, on the lateral sides of a cippus, the god is shown leaning with his left hand on a *pedum,* and from a monument of unknown provenience, where, on its front side, three busts are presented inside a niche, while left and right of the niche, an image of *Attis tristis* is presented.[543] Both monuments are dated to the period of the 2nd – 3rd century.

Only one bronze statuette of the presumed god Attis, from an unknown locality, is known on the territory of the Central Balkans (cat. 59). It represents a youth, standing, clothed in an Oriental garment and wearing a Phrygian cap. His curly hair is gathered under the cap, while his face is carefully modelled, as is his whole body, with slightly feminized hips. His right hand is raised and in it the youth holds a small animal, probably a rabbit (?).[544] In his left hand, a part of a *pedum* is visible (the upper part of pedum is missing).[545] In his interpretation, M. Veličković writes that the youth represents the god Attis and dates the statuette to the 2nd or the 3rd century.[546] In her unpublished doctoral thesis, M. Ružić also identified the statuette as

[535] Вулић, Ладек, Премерштајн, 1903: 70; Kojić 1961: 3, B.

[536] The front side of sarcophagus found in Zemun is made from a white limestone (1m height, 1,6m width) and the image of *Attis tristis* was presented on its left side, within the profiled field. The inscription reads: *D(is) m(anibus) | C. Iul(ius) Serenus vet(eranus) l[eg(ionis) IIII | F(laviae) F(elicis)] | sarcofagum cond[idit sibi]| vi(v)us posuit ann(is) LXXX m[ensi] | bus... Iul(iam) Heracliam et S[abi] | nillam filias et Aurel(iam) Reg[inam ?]| uxorem,* The fragmented sarcophagus is dated to the 1st century, Вулић 1933: 31, num. 86.

[537] Vermaseren, de Boer 1986: 26, num. 54.

[538] The motives of so-called 'Attis' masks' that is the image of Attis heads were mostly decorating each end of the sarcophagus' lid, with the symbolism of 'guarding the deceased' or meaning that the deceased belonged to Magna Mater's cult, as it is the case for example with Metilia Acta, Mucznik 1999: 61-79. The representations of Attis with Magna Mater on sarcophagus are known mostly from the finds in Ostia and Rome, as in sarcophagi from the tomb 75, from the locality Isola Sacra near Rome, where *archigallus* is presented with Magna Mater and Attis, that is the scene where Magna Mater and her paredros observe the contest of Apollo and Marsyas, Sfameni Gasparro 1985, 101.

[539] M. J. Vermaseren mentions bronze figurine from Aginnum in Gaul and teracottas from Ostia, Vermaseren 1966: 14; *CCCA* Iv, 52-53, num. 132, 134; relief of Attis with syrinx on an altar from Gloucester (Glevum) in Britannia, Harris, Harris 1965: 101; Henig 1993: 31, pl. 25, num. 92.

[540] Душанић 1980: 7-55.

[541] *IMS* II, num. 69.

[542] Škegro 1998: 91.

[543] Којић 1961: 3, num. 4.

[544] M. J. Vermaseren thinks it is a fish, *CCCA* VI: num. 378.

[545] M. J. Vermaseren suggests a knife instead of a pedum, Ibid.

[546] Величковић 1972: 62, num. 91, fig. 91.

a representation of the Phrygian god.[547] Analysing the iconography of the bronze statuette, it is not difficult to determine that it does not have any direct iconographic analogies with so-far known representations of the god, where he is shown with different attributes, but not holding a rabbit, fish or any animal of a similar size.[548] The animal in the statuette's right hand could even be a duck, while the object in his left hand is in too fragmented a state to be absolutely certain that it represents a *pedum*. Therefore, the only argument which is left for the identification of a young man as Attis is his Phrygian cap, also typical of other Asia Minor gods (like Jupiter Dolichenus, Sabazius or *Mēn), but also for* the Persian god Mithras and his dadophors, Paris and Ganymede. However, the attributes that the youth holds in his hands, and his posture, help in his identification as a genius of winter shown as the god Attis.[549]

In Roman art, genii of seasons were usually represented as boys or youths, with vessels or baskets with fruit and flowers, holding an animal (duck or rabbit) or fish they had caught, wearing on their heads a wreath made of flowers, fruits or other crops characteristic of the season with which the genius in question is represented.[550] The genius of spring was shown with a goat, hunting dog, peacock, swallow and roses, while the genius of summer was represented with a lion, parrot and ears of wheat. The genius of autumn had animal companions like a panther and held grapes, while the genius of winter was followed by a boar, holding a duck or a rabbit, but also an olive branch. Personifications of the seasons started to appear more from the 2nd century, symbolising the eternal cycle of life and death, fertility and *felicitas temporum.*[551] From the early 2nd century, personifications of the seasons were represented on honorary imperial monuments, in the glory of the prosperity and peace they assured,[552]while later, during the 3rd and the 4th century, depending on the context within which they were shown,[553] personifications of the seasons symbolised a hope for the salvation of the soul, resurrection and the eternal life of the deceased.[554]

Scenes with the genius of winter presented as a naked Attis without a hat are known from the early 3rd century,[555]while from the middle of the 3rd century the figures of the genius of winter are usually clothed, wearing hats.[556] As can be seen from Roman terracottas, statuettes, sarcophagi and mosaics, the image of the genius of winter is presented as a Phrygian god – he wears a *tunica manicata*, trousers *anaxyrides* and a Phrygian hat.[557] On the well known Late Antique Seasons sarcophagus from Dumberton Oaks, dated to the first half or the 4th century, the genius of winter is presented as Attis, in an open tunica with exposed genitals, wearing a wreath made of pine branches on his head and probably holding a basket, duck or rabbit in his right hand.[558]Another equally interesting sarcophagus from Emporia in Spain, also dated to the 4th century, presents the genius of winter as Attis, dressed in a caped tunica, *anaxyrides* and shoes. Although the attributes from the youth's hands are missing, M. J. Vermaseren presumes that he held a *pedum* in one hand. Turning towards the possible iconographic and stylistic analogies of the bronze statuette of genius of winter presented as the god Attis, we find the scene from the marble sarcophagus from Salona very similar to our statue – the youth is presented as the genius of winter as Attis and is clothed in an Oriental garment, wearing a Phrygian hat, and holding a small animal in his right hand (a duck, rabbit?) and a branch in his left

[547] Ružić 2006: 257, cat. 332.

[548] God Attis is usually presented with pedum, syrinx, tympanum, cimbals, flute, pine cone, pine branch, pomegranate, violets, wheat, cornucopia, a basket of fruits, torch and his usual animal companions are a dog, a ram, a capricorn, a goat and a lamb.

[549] Гавриловић 2015: 231-243.

[550] The personifications of seasons are known from the 1st century, when they were presented as young girls in the fragmented relief from Clodia's tomb from Roccagiovane, which represents the oldest scene of personifications in sepulchral art. A genius from Trajan's triumphal arch from Benevento is considered the earliest image of personification of seasons presented as man, Hanfmann 1951: num. 116, 83, 84, 171, 216.

[551] P. Zanker writes that the personifications of seasons from the early period of Hadrian's reign carry the idea of offering the gifts of nature to the deceased. They are often presented with sea creatures or Dionysus and his thiasos and in that context, they symbolised happiness, abundance and pleasure in life, Zanker 2012: 163-164, 256.

[552] Personifications of seasons are presented on the coins of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Faustina Younger and Commodus as Erotes who dance, with the inscription *temporum felicitas,* Toynbee 1934: 217.

[553] The scenes with personifications of seasons on sarcophagi (whether wearing baskets with fruits and flowers or as they stand beside the tomb doors as true guardians of the deceased) are symbolic allusions to the visits and offerings in fruit and flowers that alive relatives bring to the deceased, as the images of the gardens full with flowers and trees with fruits in which the deceased was buried. On the mosaics, however, the personifications of seasons usually celebrate nature, country life and the pleasure of country life, Zanker 2012: 163-164.

[554] McCann 1978: 135-136.

[555] The earliest presentation of *Attis tristis* with the genii of seasons is known from the relief of the funerary monument belonging to the family Concordii, dated to the first half of the 1st century. The lower part of the monument is decorated with a relief of four genii, flanked on both sides with the figure of *Attis tristis.* However, the monument doesn't represent the earliest known example of the personification of the winter as Attis, *CCCA* IV, num. 210.

[556] G. M. A. Hanfmann assumes that the precursors of the Attis' presentations as the genius of winter are the images of personifications of the months January or February in the Roman calendar, because of the figure of a Phrygian boy who sheds rain from the jug, Hanfmann 1951: 240.

[557] M. J. Vermaseren states that beside the standing presentations of the genius of winter as Attis, presentations of the god sitting, usually with a boyish face, also exist, Vermaseren 1966: 20, 39-40.

[558] The detailed description of Seasons sarcophagus from Dumberton Oaks is given by G. M. A. Hanfmann, who writes that personifications of seasons presented as youths are shown on Trajan's triumphal arc from Benevento. The sarcophagi with personifications of seasons are mostly known from Rome or its surroundings. Marble sarcophagus with the presentations of four seasons from Dumberton Oaks was discovered in Rome and presents on the front side four-winged genii of seasons, with wreaths on their heads made from the plant which is characteristic for the season in question, Hanfmann 1951; Richter 1956: 19-22.

hand.[559] The other iconographic analogy is found in another sarcophagus lid, also from Salona,[560] where the genius of winter presented as Attis is holding a branch and a basket of fruits. Both monuments are dated to the 3rd century.[561]

As for the symbolism of the statuette of the genius of winter presented as the god Attis, we will need to make a short digression. F. Cumont explains that the reason for the appearance of the genius of winter presented as Attis in Roman art of the 3rd and 4th century lies in the symbolism of the deity; a god who dies and resurrects.[562] R. Turcan somewhat agrees with this hypothesis, but adds that due to Attis' aspect of a reborn god, one would rather expect that the god would be presented as the genius of spring and not of winter.[563]As for the different opinions about the symbolism of the genius of winter presented as Attis on sarcophagi, F. Cumont's believed that the image represented the faith in the deceased's resurrection and his new, eternal life.[564] G. M. A. Hanfmann presumes that the presentations of the genius of winter as Attis appeared out of confusion and replacement of Adonis or Ganymede with Attis.[565] A. Rumf thinks that the genius of winter does not represent the god Attis, because none of the god's attributes (*pedum*, tympanum, cymbals or pine cone) are presented on the sarcophagi together with the image,[566] while G. Sfameni Gasparo suggests that the presentations of the genius of winter as Attis display an image similar to the figure of *Attis tristis* on funerary monuments, since they contain the same symbolism of a mythical person who did not die but is sleeping and resting, in much the same way that vegetation 'rests' during the winter.[567] R. Turcan, reviewing his own presumptions about the genius of winter presented as the god Attis, returns to part of F. Cumont's hypothesis, stating that the presentations of genii of the seasons on sarcophagi symbolise rebirth and the hope of eternal life, which, in the context of these representations, only emphasise their symbolic meaning.[568] Returning to the bronze statuette of the genius of winter presented as Attis, of unknown provenience, in light of its earlier proposed dating to the 2nd or the 3rd century, I would like to suggest a narrower time frame, from the middle to the end of the 3rd century, when the genius of winter presented as Attis appears with a Phrygian hat, like the one on the head of the bronze statuette of the genius of winter presented as Attis.[569]

Three bronze appliqués, which probably present Attis' bust, are known from the Central Balkans territory, but, unfortunately, only one of their provenience is known, while the other two are of unknown provenience (cat. 60-62). The bronze appliqué from Ritopek represents a man in a Phrygian hat, with curly hair under it (cat. 60). Since the head is summarily modelled and shows traits of serial production, its local origin is clear. Iconographic and stylistic analogies are found in an appliqué from Aquileia,[570] and one from Cisimbrium in Spain[571], and a bronze statuette from Munzach in Raetia.[572]

The first of the two bronze appliqués of unknown provenience represents the coarse work of a local artisan, with no face features and only a recognisable Phrygian hat. In the centre of the deity's bust, there is a hole for the fixing of the appliqué. The closest iconographic and stylistic analogy is found in a bronze appliqué of Attis from Surduk.[573] The appliqué is dated to the 3rd century. The other bronze appliqué in the shape of Attis' bust represents a local product of better quality, where the god is shown with curly hair and clear facial features. The appliqué is most similar to the one from Mildenhall in Britain, [574] particularly in the context of its triangular face, curls and plastically shaped pupils. This bronze appliqué of unknown provenience is also dated to the 3rd century.

Three small bronze appliqués in the shape of Attis' bust were decorations on a physician's chest found in grave G-1007 in the locality of Pećine in Viminacium.[575] All three appliqués represent accomplished work, where the details such as the carefully modelled Phrygian hat of the god and facial features are skilfully rendered. The presence of appliqués in the form of Attis' bust on a chest where the medical instruments of a physician were held, indicate the possibility that the physician was a believer in the Metroac cult.

559 Cambi 1960: 55–56; Medini 1981: br. 60.
560 Cambi 1960: num. 12; Cambi 2002: 166-167, fig. 255-256.
561 I would also like to mention the fragmented marble statuette of the genius of winter from Belgrade, which shares certain iconographic similarities with the bronze statuette of the genius of winter presented as Attis from National Museum in Belgrade, in the face features and the feminized form of the body, Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 179, num. 75, fig. 75.
562 Cumont 1942: 491.
563 R. Turcan presumes that the reason for presenting genius of winter as Attis on Roman sarcophagi from the 3rd century was: either certain confusion in the model books or that the presentations of the genius of winter as Attis reflected religious beliefs of Romans in the 3rd century, Turcan 1996: 69.
564 Cumont 1942: 489.
565 Hanfmann 1951: 240-241.
566 Which is not true, because presentations of the genius of winter as Attis with pedum are known. A. Rumpf resumes that the so-called Attis-genius of winter isn't Phrygian god, that is the image doesn't comprise deity's symbolism, Rumpf 1954: 176-179.
567 Sfameni Gasparro 1985: 93-94.
568 Turcan 1966: 595-598.
569 Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 170, num. 75.
570 *CCCA* IV, num. 230.
571 *CCCA* V, num. 163.
572 *CCCA* VI, num. 67.
573 Brunšmid 1914, num. 159.
574 Toynbee 1962 : 145, num. 39, plate 39
575 Спасић-Ђурић 2015: 100-101, fig. 102. A wooden casket with three small bronze appliques in the shape of a young man's head with Phrygian hat ornamenting it, was found in a physician grave Г-1007 from Viminacium, dated to the 2nd century, Ibid: 61, fig. 63

Bronze masks of Attis from physician casket Viminacium
(photo-documentation: National Museum Požarevac)

The only find of terracotta probably presenting the god Attis was found in a sacrificial horizon above one of the graves at the necropolis of 'Više grobalja' in Viminacium. Only the head and the upper part of a youth's torso were preserved (cat. 63). The youth is wearing a Phrygian hat, with particularly long ends that cover part of the figurine's torso. The face is modelled quite summarily, with the facial features emphasised by incisions. The iconographic analogies are numerous, but the Attis terracotta from Viminacium is iconographically and stylistically most similar to a terracotta of the god from Amphipolis.[576] Therefore, it is very possible that the terracotta from Viminacium could represent an import from Greece, particularly after observing its further similarities with another terracotta from Amphipolis, from the Greek collection in the National Museum in Belgrade.[577] However, the same iconographic type to which the Viminacium terracotta belongs is recognised in a terracotta from Sirmium, which represents a local product from the 1st century.[578] The terracotta of Attis from Viminacium is dated between the 1st to the 3rd century.

At the end of presenting all known monuments of the god Attis in the Central Balkans, I would like to mention two bronze objects: a figurative piece from a carriage of unknown provenience and a bronze part of the decoration of a horse-drawn carriage from Kostolac, Viminacium, with the representation of the god Attis' head. The figurative piece from a carriage of unknown provenience represents a youth wearing a Phrygian hat, which probably stood on vertical supporting tubes. Visible damage on the bust's rear implies that a vertical tube linked to the stand existed or that the damage in the middle could indicate it served as a kind of support. The Attis bust is similar to a bust from Madrid and could be dated to the 3rd century.[579]

The bronze part of the decoration of a horse-drawn carriage from Kostolac, Viminacium, is actually part of an object with a preserved figure of a lion standing on a fragmented part of a semicircular tube, with an identical lion on the opposite side of the other part of a closed mount of semicircular or horseshoe shape. The lion is resting its paw on a shield, on which Attis'

[576] *CCCA* VI, num. 234, 254, 257.
[577] Цвјетићанин 1992: 356, IVc, fig. 11. The collection of terracottas in the National Museum in Belgrade encompasses 255 fragmented statuettes that present a young man with a Phrygian hat, tunica manicata, anaxyrides and a cloak. He is presented holding or playing the syrinx, sometimes with a pedum, sometimes he is gay, sometimes sad. The terracottas were made in some workshop in Amphipolis, dating from the 2nd or 3rd century, Ibid: 349-362.
[578] The fragmented terracotta presenting god Attis from Sirmium was found near north city wall (sondage 255, now in the museum of Srem, inv. num. A/2767). The youth has a Phrygian hat, while the face is very carefully modelled. Z. Pejović thinks that the terracotta belonged to a settlement in a wider territory of Sirmium. The terracotta dates to the 1st century, Пејовић 1995: 46, cat. 14.
[579] Ratković 2008: 796-797.

Attis mask on a yoke belonging to a horse harness from Viminacium
(Ratković 2008: fig. 15)

bust is represented. The object belonged to variant C of Radnóti's typology (mounts in the shape of a horseshoe with figurative decoration of a pair of animals).[580] Mounts like this served as part of the yoke of the horse harness and their function was to guide the strap to the outer side of the yoke.[581] These objects were mostly found in the western Roman provinces, in military fortifications (localities like Novaessium, Vindonissa, Porolissum, Brigetio, etc.), outside carriage burials, except for finds from Thrace (Stara Zagora, Chatal Tepe and Svilengrad). The bronze find from Kostolac is unique in the Central Balkans territory and has analogies in finds from Buda-Gellerhegy, Cologne and Buciumi. The object's decorative function is more than clear and it is dated to the first half of the 2nd century.[582]

2.3. The Cult of Attis in the Central Balkans

The image of the god Attis is confirmed on more than 50 funerary monuments and his cult is attested with one bronze statuette, one terracotta and bronze appliqués in the shape of the god's bust. Although the number of monuments with an *Attis tristis* image is really debatable when compared to other Roman provinces, other monuments in connection to Attis' cult do not imply the variety of iconographic presentations of the deity, which would perhaps further suggest a strong knowledge of Metroac mythology and religion on the territory of Central Balkans' provinces. Also, the syncretism of the *Attis tristis* image with the presentations of other gods like Mithras, Silvanus and Dionysus/Liber suggests that the Central Balkan population was not acquainted more deeply with the cult's mythology and theology, or with all the aspects under which Attis was worshipped in Rome. From the corpus of archaeological monuments presented in the last chapter, it is clear that the most frequent iconographic representation of the Phrygian god in Central Balkan localities is the image of *Attis tristis.* Through analysis of the already mentioned four types of *Attis tristis* iconography on funerary monuments, sometimes combined with other iconographic motifs and inscription, I will try to present as much as possibly an accurate picture of the god's dedicants, their origin and social status, and their possible belonging to the Metroac cult.

Before that, however, a concise review of so-far known scholarly hypotheses regarding the origin and meaning of this type of iconographic presentation of the god Attis is needed in order for a better understanding of the interpretation which will be given here.

The presentation of the *Attis tristis* image on monuments has been a subject of interest for numerous historians of religions and archaeologists since the end of the 19th century, yet no synthesis that would encompass all so-far known scholarly analyses and interpretations about this particular iconographic type of Attis' presentations has yet been written. A review of existing hypotheses shows that they differ mostly in the question as to whether the representations of *Attis tristis* are the consequence of the development and spread of Magna Mater's and Attis' cults or that the motif of *Attis tristis* contains symbolism that, perhaps, is not related to Magna Mater's cult. To the current views on this type of Attis iconographic representations, contributes the fact that new monuments with an *Attis tristis* image have been discovered, whose analysis allows the presumption of never before confirmed aspects of the god on funerary monuments, which could prove that the *Attis tristis* image was, without doubt, related to the cult of Magna Mater.

F. Cumont repeatedly discussed the motif of *Attis tristis* and, in his opinion, there is an indisputable iconographic and symbolic relationship between the god Attis and Mithras' torch-bearers Cautes and Cautopates.[583] In his view, clear iconographic similarities in the body positions and clothing of Attis and the dadophors supports his opinion, but he admits that there is also a noticeable difference in the attributes that Attis and Mithras' acolytes are presented with - *Attis tristis* is usually shown with a *pedum*, while

[580] Ibid: 798.
[581] Most frequent figurative representations are the ones in the shape of a lion or panther, with Attis'bust, Medisa, woman's head or Satyr on a shield, Ibid.
[582] Ibid: 799.
[583] Cumont 1896: 2247-2252; Cumont 1899.

Cautes and Cautopates hold a torch. Because of the different attributes presented with Attis and with the dadophors, F. Cumont thought that the figures shown with the attribute of a *pedum* should be called by the name of Attis, who was, in his opinion, a symbol of eternal life. Actually, the author based his opinion on the presumption about the close association between Magna Mater's cult and the cult of the god Mithras.[584]

In his study about Attis and his cult, H. Hepding stated that the image of *Attis tristis* on funerary monuments at the start of their appearance in the Roman Empire contained soteriological and eschatological symbolism, but because of the frequent appearance of the motif on funerary monuments, the *Attis tristis* image lost its symbolism and became purely decorative.[585]

In his monumental study of the Magna Mater cult, H. Graillot agrees with H. Hepding's opinion and adds that the motif of *Attis tristis* had a chthonian and soteriological dimension in the earliest period, which was later lost and the image retained only a decorative value.[586]

A. Schober also touches on the issue of the *Attis tristis* image and thinks that the representation does not have any connection with the Metroac cult, and that the motif itself cannot be interpreted as a symbol of the belief in the eternal life.[587]

M. J. Legrange also thought that monuments with the image of *Attis tristis* do not have a Metroac character, in the context that nothing implies a soteriological or eschatological symbolism of the image.[588] The author continues that only one monument could indicate the religious context of these 'funerary shepherds', since it is dedicated to Magna Mater.[589] J. Medini rightly observes that M. J. Legrange focused solely on the problems of the relationship between Attis and Christianity and analysed only a certain number of monuments, which he used to prove his hypothesis that the images of *Attis tristis* were, to a certain degree, a symbol of the deceased's family grief for their loved one, but that they were not images with a religious connotation, which led him to the conclusion that the images of the Phrygian god did not possess any deeper symbolism.[590]

E. Will offered an interesting hypothesis in his study about the cult of Mithras and Mithraism. Starting from the same basis as M. J. Legrange, that monuments with an *Attis tristis* image do not possess a religious character, the author continued by wondering whether the image actually shows the Phrygian god. After analysing several monuments, E. Will concluded that *Attis tristis* images represent 'banal funerary symbols without precise cult meaning'.[591] He also added that during the Roman reign, the motif represented the image of a 'servant', frequently shown on funerary monuments with the scenes of funeral banquets, of Asia Minor provenience.[592] Since on Asia Minor monuments with the scene of a funeral banquet, two or more servants are presented, the author thinks that this type of iconography was transferred to Roman funerary monuments, on which Oriental servants were presented in pairs.[593] The main issue with E. Will's hypothesis, which he himself admitted, is that only on one monument from the Ephesus' surroundings is the servant wearing an Oriental garment – on all the other representations known from Roman provinces, the figures of *Attis tristis* are clothed in a Greek chiton with a himation.[594]

One step further in the hypothesis that the image of *Attis tristis* actually represents the figure of an Oriental servant and not the Phrygian god was made by R. Stuveras, who suggested that in the earliest period of the motif's existence it did not contain any religious significance, but due to the young man being in Oriental clothes, the image became identified with the representation of Attis.[595] It is clear the R. Stuveras actually thought that, during the Roman period, some kind of 'thesis replacement' was made, in which the image of an ordinary servant was considered to present the Phrygian god Attis. However, a logical question comes to mind – why Attis? Other Asia Minor gods were also presented in Oriental garments (Sabazius, Mēn and

[584] On three Mithraistic reliefs, F. Cumont noticed that one of Mithras' dadophors is presented with his head leant on his hand, as god Attis is presented, so he further assumes that two deities were closely connected, Cumont 1899: 438.

[585] As F. Cumont, H. Hepding believed that *Attis tristis* image symbolized lifting of the deceased's soul to immortality, that is a hope for the eternal life, Hepding 1903: 202, ft. 5.

[586] Graillot 1912: 438, 495.

[587] Schober 1923: 207, 212-220.

[588] M. J. Legrange writes that in works of ancient writers, Attis is nowhere mentioned as a god, but as Magna Mater's companion, Legrange 1919: 121.

[589] The author is quoting the funerary monument from Salona on which front side is an inscription dedicated by mourning parents to their early deceased son, while on the lateral sides the image of *Attis tristis* is presented, *CIL* 3, 6384; Medini 1981, 527-528, num. 58.

[590] M. J. Legrange doesn't disapprove that the images of *Attis tristis* presented a symbol of mourning and sadness because of the loss of the loved one, but is adamant that they represent nothing more and certainly not the symbol of the faith in the resurrection and eternal life, Legrange 1919: 475.

[591] Will 1955: 200.

[592] E. Will argued his hypothesis with the description from one funerary monument from Istambul museum with the scene of the funeral banquet, on which several servants are presented standing, with their left hand placed over their bellies, parallelly with their waists, similar to the iconography of *Attis tristis* images, Ibid: 202.

[593] The author emphasises the identical posture of the servants' images from Asia Minor funerary monuments with the scene of the funeral banquet, with the posture of *Attis tristis* images and concludes that the latter presentations show the servants and not Phrygian god, Ibid: 203.

[594] Ibid: 202, fig. 36.

[595] Medini 1981: 105

the Persian Mithras), so the image of a servant could have been identified with some of them and not Attis. Also, the iconography of Attis was not known in the territory of Asia Minor, but only in Greece and there the deity was fully dressed in Greek clothes.

One of the most important scholars of the Magna Mater and Attis cults, M. J. Vermaseren, does not pay much attention to the image of *Attis tristis* and its symbolism.[596] In his study about the cults of the two deities, the author only mentions the iconographic type of *Attis tristis* as an indirect confirmation of the Metroac cult.[597]

D. M. Cosi offered a new hypothesis about the symbolism of *Attis tristis* images - they represented motifs which served not only to ease the grief of the death of the deceased for their loved ones, but also to ease the grief of the persons who was looking at the image of *Attis tristis* on funerary monuments.[598]

G. Sfameni Gasparro shares, to a certain degree, the opinion of P. Boyancé, who thought, in the context of the winged Attis who carries Ganymede to Heaven in a fresco from Hypogeum, that the image symbolically presented the theme of the *αωροι,* that is of a youth who died prematurely (the author calls the figure who carries Ganymede a 'winged genius').[599] P. Boyancé thinks, however, that the motif of *Attis tristis* has a religious and not purely decorative character. G. Sfameni Gasparo does not think that the representations of *Attis tristis* are only in connection with young deceased persons, but that instead of having a particular relationship with Magna Mater's cult, the image primarily symbolised grieving for the deceased and, secondarily, a hope for a happy eternal life.[600] The author also observes a double symbolism of Attis presented as the genius of winter, but also as the genius of spring[601] and adds that the soteriological and eschatological symbolism of the god on funerary monuments can, perhaps, be ascribed to the transformation of Attis into an astral and celestial deity.[602]

G. Bauchhenss believes that the iconography and symbolism of the *Attis tristis* motif have their origins in the image of a defeated barbarian and an image of an Oriental shepherd. He does not, therefore, believe that the Phrygian god Attis is in question in the funerary motifs from the Roman period.[603]

M. G. Lancellotti constates that epigraphic inscriptions from funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image leave little space for any other interpretation of the god, except that he was a symbol of sadness and grief for the deceased. However, she emphasises that the motifs of a pine cone, pine branch, poppy or pomegranate, which symbolise eternal life, are frequently present on funerary monuments with a figure of *Attis tristis*. Therefore, they could imply the symbolism of the god as a hope for the eternal life of the deceased. The author illustrates her hypothesis with the example of a funerary monument from Rome with an image of *Attis tristis* and an inscription in which the belief in the celestial origin of the soul is expressed.[604] This belief is also expressed in a funerary monument from Salona, dated to the period of Diocletian, with touching verses.[605]

The first of the authors from the Central Balkans territory who dealt with the problematics of the *Attis tristis* image on funerary monuments from the area of Podrinje (basin of the river Drina) was D. Sergejevski, who thought that the image represented a symbol of grief, but also of the hope for eternity.[606]

S. Kojić first tackled the problem of *Attis tristis* figures in her master thesis, then in her article where she repeated her previously stated opinion that the image symbolised sadness for the deceased, but that it was very readily accepted by the indigenous population of the Central Balkans, who perhaps equated the Attis image with some unknown indigenous deity. In her opinion, the iconography of *Attis tristis* on funerary

[596] Vermaseren 1966: 41.

[597] M. J. Vermaseren mentions numerous funerary monuments from Dalmatia and the western part of Moesia Superior and on the behalf of the spreading of the Metroac cult in these parts, also writes about the funerary monuments with the motives of a pine tree and pine cone, Vermaseren 1977: 143.

[598] Cosi 1976: 42-71.

[599] Boyancé 1972: 86 and further.

[600] Sfameni Gasparro 1985: 93. The author argues her hypothesis on the example of the inscription from Rome, of dedicant Hector who recalls the past joys from his life, although the sad tone in the inscription prevails because there is no happiness in the afterlife, Ibid: 94. As her second argument, G. Sfameni Gasparro quotes the inscription from the 3rd century funerary monument erected for a child prematurely dead, who had performed mystery rituals of Bona Dea, Dionysus, Hermes Hegemonios and Magna Mater but still died. Therefore, there is no hope or consolation for the early deceased child and G. Sfameni Gasparro thinks that the primary function of *Attis tristis* images was as a symbol of the grief for the deceased and not the hope for his eternal life, Ibid: 95.

[601] On lost sarcophagus from Rome, Attis is presented as a genius of spring, Vermaseren 1966: 39.

[602] Sfameni Gasparro 1985: 99.

[603] Bauchhenss 1997: 43-52.

[604] The dedicant of the Rome monument was a priest of Magna Mater who obviously believed in the blissfulness of eternal life, Ibid: 97-98; Lancellotti 2002: 162

[605] The funerary monument from Salona is dedicated to the 13-year old son of grieving parents, Quintus Aeronius Firminus, and the parents expressing their sadness because of the premature death of their child, at the end of the inscription show also their hope that his soul will return to Heaven and live an immortal life, Medini 1981: 527-528, num. 58.

[606] D. Sergejevski also notices the similarity between the images of *Attis tristis* on funerary monuments from Podrinje with the motif on funerary monuments from the surroundings of Sremska Mitrovica. Also, his arguments for the mentioned hypothesis are found in the scenes of the funeral banquet, ivy leaves, grapes and genius image with grapes, presented on funerary monuments with the image of *Attis tristis* on its lateral sides, Sergejevski 1934: 30.

monuments from the mentioned territory contained the beliefs of the indigenous population from the pre-Roman period.[607]

Lj. Zotović based her attitude on F. Cumont's and E. Will's opinions regarding the close relationship between the *Attis tristis* image and the Mithras cult. The author states that the modest number of Magna Mater monuments from the province of Dalmatia is not proportional to the numerous monuments with the *Attis tristis* image. Therefore, she does not think that the image of a young man dressed in Oriental clothes presented on funerary monuments is Attis at all, but rather 'some kind of Oriental genius of death'. At the same time, she emphasises the direct association between an Oriental genius and the Mithraistic cult, because of the mutual attribute of the torch present in both iconographies.[608]

M. Garašanin briefly wrote about the *Attis tristis* image on funerary monuments from the Central Balkans' western parts and presumed that it represented the god Silvanus, that is to say, a syncretistic presentation of Silvanus and Attis. His arguments for such a hypothesis are the similar characteristics of both gods, but also the absence of Silvanus' cult from the western parts of the Central Balkans, where, in his opinion, his cult was substituted with the cult of the god Attis.[609]

M. R. Vasić does not accept Lj. Zotović hypothesis and thinks that the motif of *Attis tristis* on the funerary monuments from western parts of the Central Balkans has no religious connotation, but that it was accepted by the indigenous population because of a certain syncretism with Silvanus, and later also blended with certain elements from Dionysus' iconography.[610]

M. Zotović agrees with the opinion of M. Garašanin and states that the image was probably an indigenous interpretation of the Illyrian god of vegetation and woods.[611]

E. Imamović repeats D. Sergejevski's opinion that *Attis tristis* image was a symbol of Metroac cult, who designated the hope in resurection and after life existence.[612]

In his unfortunately unpublished, but brilliant doctoral thesis, J. Medini gives a very detailed review of funerary monuments from the province Dalmatia with the *Attis tristis* image and concludes that it is the image of the Phrygian god and not of an Oriental servant, shepherd or barbarian. The author bases his arguments on the relief from one of the most important military centres of the province of Dalmatia, Burnum[613] and, more importantly, on the presentation identical to the *Attis tristis* image, from the breast plaque of the *archigallus* on the already mentioned Lavinium relief. J. Medini is convinced, since Salona was an important centre of Metroac cult, that the *Attis tristis* image on Salona monuments has a religious dimension and that it represented a symbol of grieving, but also of hope in eternal life.[614] The author suggests that funerary monuments from the eastern part of the province of Dalmatia (the western part of the Central Balkans), copy the iconography from Salona monuments, but contain less emphasised religious symbolism. Still, because of the pre-Roman beliefs of the indigenous population from Užice and its surroundings, the author thinks that the image of *Attis tristis* on funerary monuments from that area expressed a deep belief in life after death. The conclusion of J. Medini is that, depending on the area where funerary monuments with the *Attis tristis* image are discovered, the image either does or does not contain a religious dimension.[615]

N. Cambi was also one of the scholars who discussed the symbolism of *Attis tristis* figures on funerary monuments from Croatia and, in his opinion, in the context of the military stele from Tilurium, he concludes that *Attis tristis* images present a motif from military and triumphal iconography, while *Attis tristis* images from Salona monuments are representations of Oriental shepherds, whose iconography was copying the iconography of Erotes.[616]

R. Zotović explains the favouring of *Attis tristis* images among the indigenous population in western parts of the Central Balkans, with their identification of the *Attis tristis* figure with some indigenous unknown deity of fertility, fields and woods or with an ordinary shepherd. Also, the author distinguishes the symbolism of the *Attis tristis* image with a pedum and the *Attis tristis*

[607] Којић 1961; Којић 1963: 228-229.
[608] Lj. Zotović also repeats earlier existing attitudes of different scholars about *Attis tristis* image being the symbol of the grieving for the deceased, but also of hope for the eternal life, Зотовић 1969: 433, 437-439.
[609] Garašanin, Garašanin 1951: 158.
[610] Vasić 1973: 365 and further.
[611] M. Zotović notices that Silvanus' presentations are not frequent in south-western parts of Central Balkans, but that perhaps the indirect influence of god's cult can be recognized in the motives of trees, as on the funerary monument from Užice, on which' lateral sides instead of *Attis tristis* images, the images of trees are represented, Зотовић 1973: 34.
[612] Imamović 1977: 74-76.
[613] J. Medini reminds that on Phrygian monuments from the Roman period, Attis is addressed to as a chthonian god, who protects the deceased. The author states that for the identification of the images *Attis tristis* from the funerary monuments as the images of Phrygian god, the position of the upper part of the body of *Attis tristis* figures (with characteristically positioned arms and head bent downwards) is crucial, because it is unique only in Attis' iconography (Cautes and Cautopates are only seldomly presented like that), Medini 1981: 128-130.
[614] Ibid: 163.
[615] Ibid: 171.
[616] Cambi 1991: 473; Cambi 2002: 158; Cambi 2005: 102-105, 188-189.

figure with a torch, seeing in the latter an iconographic type with an influence from Mithraistic iconography.[617]

Discussing the motif of a 'mourning Oriental' on Roman funerary monuments from Croatia, I. Miletić, A. Pavlić, P. Šukanec Rezniček and I. Vilogorac Brčić consider the motif as a special phenomenon in Roman funeral iconography, with the possibility of its relationship with the cult of the Great Mother and Attis.[618]

After a thorough analysis of the funerary monuments with *Attis tristis* images, I find the opinions and conclusions of J. Medini to be closest to the reality of the religious beliefs and knowledge that the Romanised population of western parts of the Central Balkans possessed during Antiquity (from this I exclude funerary monuments with the motif of *Attis tristis* from Viminacium and its surroundings, which I will discuss later). As the tomb of Attis was an influential image in the cult of the god, as J. Alvar suggests, his image similarly symbolised the god's dual character - as a deity, on one side, associated with celestial gods and, on the other side, related to the gods of the Underworld (which is, in J. Alvar's opinion, implied with the find of a *defixio* from the Magna Mater and Isis sanctuary in Mainz, where Attis is associated with Castor and Pollux), with his primary association, however, being with death.[619]

The representations of the first iconographic type of the *Attis tristis* image, where his figure is shown without any attributes, are considered chronologically the oldest, whose distribution was related to the soldiers of the Legion VII Claudia, who are mentioned on known funerary stele from Tilurium with an image of *Attis tristis.*[620] Beside the image of *Attis tristis,* on the military funerary stele from Tilurium, the motif of *porta inferi* is presented, whose symbolism of the transfer from this world life to afterlife is well known from funerary monuments.[621] Here it is important to remember that the Legion VII Claudia was stationed in Tilurium from the beginning of the 1st century and left the province in the second half of the 1st century, probably during the sixth or seventh decade of the 1st century.[622] It is presumed that between 63 and 66, Legion VII Claudia arrived in Viminacium, where it stayed until the end of Antiquity. In the first half of the 1st century, most of the soldiers in Legion VII Claudia were recruited from Asia Minor, while in the second half of the 1st century, with the permanent stationing of the legion in Viminacium, the ethnic composition of the legion changed.

Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine that the iconographic type of *Attis tristis* image without any attributes carried the symbolism that Attis had in his homeland, implying his chthonian character and him being a guardian and a protector of the deceased and the tomb.[623] If we are to presume that the distribution of the *Attis tristis* image is related to soldiers of Asia Minor origin who were recruited to the Legion VII Claudia and transferred the image to the Roman province of Dalmatia, we must not forget that funerary monuments from Phrygia presented deities or their symbols, not the deceased.[624] This fact is explained by Phrygian beliefs that the soul is eternal and that, after death, it unites with the deity in which the deceased believed. Therefore, on Phrygian funerary monuments gods and goddesses in whom the deceased believed or their symbols are presented and are also considered guardians of the deceased's grave.[625] I consider that this connotation of Attis, as a chthonian god and a guardian of the deceased's grave, was contained in the presentations of *Attis tristis* shown without any attribute. This is confirmed with funerary monuments like the funerary monument from Rome, on which Magna Mater and Attis are named *dii animae aliciuius mentisque custodes*,[626] but also in the motif of Attis' head, which is frequently presented on sarcophagi and funerary monuments in the middle of the monument's gable, where a rosette or Medusa's head or some other apotropaic motif is usually presented, with the same protective dimension.[627] Therefore, it is clear that beside having a chthonian character, Attis

[617] Зотовић 1995: 67-68.

[618] Miletić, Pavlić, Šćukanec Rezniček, Vilogorac Brčić 2014: 129-144.

[619] J. Alvar is quoting a text from the curse tablet found in Mainz' sanctuary of Magna Mater and Isis, where a god is addressed to punish certain Liberalis: 'Good, holy Att(h)is, Lord, help (me), come to Liberalis in anger. I ask you by everything Lord, by your Castor (and) Pollux, by the *cistae* in your sanctuary, give him a bad mind, a bad death, as long as he lives, so that he may see himself dying all over his body – except his eyes', Gordon 2012: 199, num. B1. The reference to divine brothers Castor and Pollux, in J. Alvar's opinion, suggests the dual character of Attis, as god associated with the gods in Heaven but also with the gods from Hades, Alvar 2008: 67-68.

[620] A considerable number of the soldiers from Legion VII Claudia was recruited from the western part of Asia Minor, that is Phrygia and neighbouring provinces, Mirković 1968: 118; Medini 1981: 112.

[621] The door-motif of *porta inferi,* according to older scholar literature originated in Asia Minor, but in recent literature different authors suggest that the motif originated in central Italy or the north of Italy, Dodig 2005: 209.

[622] The Legion VII was given the honourary title *Claudia pia fidelis* by the emperor Claudius for its loyalty during the conflict with the governor of Dalmatia, Lucius Arruntius Scribonianus who wanted to dethrone Emperor Claudius, Demicheli 2018: 120.

[623] As Mother Goddess who was represented in Phrygian funerary monuments as a guardian of the tombs, the same function was attributed to Attis, whose name is known from Phrygian monuments as the guardian of the tombs and deceased (Neo-Phrygian formula *τετικμένος ΑΤΤΙC ΑΔΕΙΤΟΥ* equivalent to Greek *κατηραμένος ᾽Άττι᾽ έστω*), Sfameni Gasparro 1985: 90, ft. 21.

[624] Graillot 1912: 401.

[625] H. Graillot emphasises that Metroac adherents believed that they are a part of the deity with whom they'll unite after their death, Ibid: 402. Additional arguments can be found in the presentations of goddess Cybele or her symbols (lion, eagle) on Phrygian funerary monuments, where the goddess presented the guardian of tomb, that is the guardian of deceased.

[626] *CIL* VI, 499.

[627] For example on Sinj stele, where in the centre of a gable, Attis' head is presented, Medini 1981: 538, num. 74.

also had an apotropaic dimension and, because of that, he was a symbol *par excellence* in sepulchral art, which guarded, shielded and protected the deceased. I will now briefly comment on so-far known funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* motif belonging to the first iconographical type of these presentations, that is, where Attis is presented without an attribute or attributes. Cippi with the first iconographic type of the *Attis tristis* motif are known from the localities of Kalenić, near Požega, Pljevlja, Komini (Municipium S), Kolovrat, Crvica and Štitarevo Donje near Višegrad. The funerary monument found in the locality of Kalenić (cat. 15) was discovered near a presumed Antique necropolis[628] and N. Vulić, who first recorded it, writes that it is analogous to a funerary monument from Visibaba, where an important mining centre of Municipium M(alvesatium?) was, perhaps, situated. The locality of Kalenić belonged to the territory of Požega, with a centre in the presumed municipium M(alvesatium?), which also influenced other areas such as Arilje, Kosjerić and Užice. The numerous small necropolises that were attested in this area imply the existence of smaller settlements which also inclined towards the centre in municipium Malvesatium. The figures of Attis on the Kalenić monument's lateral sides are presented without an attribute, with motifs of a grapevine and two grapes under the figures. The symbolism of the grapevine is very clear, implying the cycle of life and Nature awakening, relating to the issues of resurrection and immortality, but also to Dionysus. The cippus from Pljevlja, the area of the presumed Municipium S, contains very interesting iconography, which, beside presenting the *Attis tristis* figure without any attribute on the left lateral side, shows two men on the front side, turned in half-profile towards the *Attis tristis* image (cat. 27). The first man is dressed in a short tunica with a glass in his right hand, while the second man, who is somewhat shorter (perhaps he was a servant?), carries a ritual vessels and a patera. It is possible that the two men were participants in some religious ritual or festivities in honour of Attis, because of the vessels they hold in their hands, but also because of their orientation towards the figure of *Attis tristis*. Near Pljevlja, an important Antique locality known as Municipium S, today's Komini, was founded on the pre-Roman Illyrian settlement.[629] In the past, scholars argued about the possible name of the Roman municipium situated in Pljevlja's territory, whose name starts with the letter S.[630] In contemporary scholarly literature, two groups of opinions exist in the context of the municipium's name – that the letter S stood for the term *Splonistae* (in connection with the tribe of the same name), or that the name was, in some way, related to the Illyrian population transferred from Siculi near Salona to the area of Pljevlja (perhaps municipium *Siculotarum*).[631]In the second half of the 2nd century, the settlement in Komini became a municipium.[632] Archaeological excavations discovered two Antique necropolises in Komini, marked as necropolis I (dated to the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century) and necropolis II (dated from the 2nd to the 4th century).[633] Epigraphic monuments attest the presence of municipal magistrates, decuriones, duoviri, quinquennales, knights, curators, priests, centurions, consular beneficiarius and veterans in the Antique city.[634] Since the majority of residents had the gentilicium Aurelius, they likely acquired their civil rights during the reign of Marcus Aurelius or perhaps Caracalla.[635]

The Antique centre in Komini was one of the first Romanised centres in the south-western parts of the Central Balkans, whose residents were predominantly of Illyrian origin, but archaeological material implies a prominent Celtic and Dacian component as well. It is presumed that the centre became a municipium in the 2nd century, but it cannot be determined whether it happened before or after the significant amount of the Delmatae population (who lived in Salona's hinterland) was transferred to the territory of Pljevlja and Prijepolje, probably during the reign of Marcus Aurelius or later.[636] G. Alföldy presumes that Illyrian inhabitants from the region of Siculi near Salona were transferred to the area of Pljevlja and Prijepolje because their land was given to Roman veterans, but also because Romans needed a workforce in the mines, quarries and fields in the area of Pljevlja.[637] Onomastic analysis of epigraphic inscriptions and the iconography of votive and funerary monuments found in the area of the presumed Municipium S, attest that the resettled Illyrians from the surroundings of Salona not only

[628] Мандић 2015: 84.

[629] Ancient writers like Appian and Strabo mention that the pre-Roman tribe of Pirusti lived in the territory of Pljevlja and Romans, upon establishing their power on that area, transferred one part of the tribe to Dacia, while the other part of Pirusti stayed to live in today's Pljevlja. Archaeological researches showed undoubted Illyrian culture, but also Thracian and Celtic material culture present on the wider territory of today's Pljevlja, Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1998; Mirković 2012: 31-36.

[630] Although the majority of scholars think that letter S in the name of Municipium S stands for Siculotarum (from Siculi near Salona), confusion was made with the inscription on Komini altar dedicated to Serapis and Isis, where the term *Splonistarum* is mentioned. This term was connected by some authors with the name of centre Splonum, which could be the antique name for today's locality Komini near Pljevlja. For different opinions of scholars about the possible name of Municipium S, see: Mirković 2012: 56-61; Мандић 2015: 149-151.

[631] Mirković 2012: 56-61.

[632] Ibid: 56.

[633] Systematic archaeological researches began in 1964. year by A. Cermanović Kuzmanović and lasted until 1975. year. The discovery of two big necropolises, necropolis I which was older and necropolis II which was younger, brought to light numerous funerary monuments and different archaeological objects, Cermanović –Kuzmanović 1966: 77-83; Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1970: 75-81; Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1981, 75-79; Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1998.

[634] *CIL* III, 8301, 8303, 8307, 8309, 8310, 8311; Цермановић-Кузмановић 1967: 201; Mirković 2012; Мандић 2015: 149.

[635] Loma 2002: 35-63; Mirković 2013: 65.

[636] Mirković 2013: 67.

[637] Alföldy 1965: 57-58.

embraced life in the new territory, but also assimilated the indigenous population, which can be observed in the sepulchral art of the monuments from necropolises I and II.[638]

This assimilation can also be observed in a funerary cippus found above a tomb in the area of necropolis II, in the locality Komini. Figures of Attis are presented on the monument's lateral sides, but differently; the Attis on the right lateral side is naked above the waist, while the Attis on the left lateral side holds a short object (perhaps a pedum?) in his left hand and is represented with exposed genitals (cat. 30). The inscription is dedicated to *Dis Manibus* by a decurion of the municipium, Aurelius Maximus Argenianus, who erected the monument for himself and his deceased daughter Aurelia Maximina. Aurelius Maximus Argenianus was probably a Romanised indigenous resident, as other people known from funerary monuments with the *Attis tristis* image were - Titus Aurelius Rufus Belzeius also from Komini, Titus Aurelius Silvanus from Tubići, Marcus Antonius from Viminacium, etc. Nevertheless, how can the unusual iconography of the *Attis tristis* image on Aurelius Maximus Argenianus' monument be explained? J. Medini presumes that the figure of Attis with exposed genitals incorporated iconography of an unknown indigenous god in the context of its fertility aspect. Another explanation would be that the *Attis tristis* figure shown on the monument's right lateral side symbolised grief and sorrow for the deceased, while the *Attis tristis* image on the left lateral side of the monument, with an exposed phallus, symbolised new birth and immortality.[639] On two other cippi discovered in the locality of Komini, Attis is presented standing on a high pedestal on one cippus and, on the other cippus, on a low pedestal, which could imply the god's presence in another, not mundane, sphere. The presentation of *Attis tristis* standing on a column is known from the vicinity of Kolovrat, near the locality 'Greek cemetery' in Drmanovići (cat. 35).[640] In the area of the Antique necropolis in the locality of Kolovrat, another confirmation of an indigenous dedicant embracing the *Attis tristis* image is presented on a funerary stele's wider lateral sides – on the front side of the monument, above the inscription field, four busts are shown (two female busts, one male bust and one bust of a child), with ornaments of ivy leaves and a kantharos flanked with two gryphons (cat. 33).[641] The inscription attests the indigenous name of the dedicant Quintus, who erected the monument for his deceased spouse Dardana. The name Quintus, although a frequent cognomen in Italy and in the Roman provinces populated with Celtic inhabitants, is attested in the province of Dalmatia as a name of indigenous residents. Dardana is also a well known name in Dalmatia, particularly in Late Antiquity, but since it is identical to the ethnicon Dardani, a presumption that Dardana was, by origin, from Dardania is possible.[642] What is puzzling, however, is the motif of the gryphon presented on the front side of the stele, which represents a unique motif on monuments from south-western parts of the Central Balkans, but a familiar one in the sepulchral art of Noricum and Pannonia, which could be ascribed to its influence, particularly since on the women's heads there is a typical Pannonian type of cap, which points to artistic influences from the northern provinces.[643] Another interesting monument is known from the area of Kolovrat, in the church in Davidovica, near the locality of Brodarevo, where a cippus with a syncretistic representation of Attis was discovered, showing the god in his usual posture, but with a beard, holding a round object in his right raised hand and grapes in his left hand (cat. 34).[644] The representation of Attis is very similar to a well known image of the genius of autumn, shown on the right lateral side of a cippus from the locality of Komini, who holds a knife for grapes and grapes.[645] Since the cult of the god Liber was attested in the area of middle Polimlje, where Kolovrat is located, it is obvious that the iconographic syncretism between Attis and Liber, rather than Attis and Silvan, is presented in the Attis image from the Kolovrat funerary cippus.

Other funerary monuments with the first iconographic type of *Attis tristis* images were confirmed in localities such as Crvica and Štitarevo Donje near Višegrad, where all of the first three iconographic types of *Attis tristis* figures are known and where this sepulchral image was favoured among the Romanised indigenous residents. The funerary monument from Crvica with an *Attis tristis* image on the right lateral side is interesting because of an oval object with a handle (perhaps a mirror?) in Attis' hand (cat. 37). The funerary monument from Štitarevo Donje near Višegrad with an *Attis tristis* image on the lateral sides, also includes a fragmented inscription with the name Dassius, which is an Illyrian name mentioned on numerous monuments from Salona, Scupi, Ratiaria, Singidunum, etc.[646] Therefore, we are again dealing with a Romanised indigenous resident.

The second iconographic type of *Attis tristis* images on Central Balkan funerary monuments presents the god with a *pedum* turned downwards (contrary to, for example, the images of *Attis tristis* from Gallia, where the

[638] Loma 2002: 35-63; Mirković 2013.
[639] Medini 1981. 174-178.
[640] Мандић 2015: 58, num. 1.
[641] Церановић-Кузмановић 1989: 8-9, num. 5, fig. 5.
[642] Ibid.
[643] The gryphon is known as a crowning motif on Noricum' funerary monuments or on grave monuments from Pannonia, Lazar 2006: 62; Migotti, Šašel Kos, Radman-Livaja 2018: 115, 120.
[644] Вулић 1931: 136, num. 330.
[645] Mirković 2013: 118-119, num. 75, fig. 75b.
[646] Којић 1961: 7-8.

god is shown with a *pedum* in the normal position).[647] The fact that, thus far, no funerary monument with a presentation of *Attis tristis* with a *pedum* in the normal position has been found, could imply that, in the earliest period of the appearance of the second iconographic type of the *Attis tristis* image, the shepherd's staff was presented turned downwards. The attribute of a *pedum* is present in the god's iconography from the very beginning, symbolically designating the deity as a Phrygian shepherd, but also as a chthonian god. However, how are we to explain the position of the pedum turned downwards? Several scholars share the same opinion that the upside down position of the *pedum* can be explained with the analogy of a torch turned downwards on the presentations of the winged genius of death or Mithras' torch-bearers, who are also presented on funerary monuments in the context of chthonian deities.[648] In the iconography of the winged genius of death and Mithras' dadophors, the attribute of a torch turned downwards symbolises death and the soul's departure to Hades.[649] Therefore, the *pedum* presented upside down in an *Attis tristis* image, probably carries the same symbolism, which, on one side, emphasises the chthonian character of the god and, on the other side, determines his identity.[650] Beside being an attribute of Attis and other divine herdsmen like Pan and Silvanus, a *pedum* is the attribute *par excellence* of the god Hermes/Mercury, which, in sepulchral art, symbolises the god's dimension as a *psychopompos*, attested in numerous archaeological monuments on which Hermes/Mercury is presented with a *caduceus* leading the deceased to Heaven.[651] I have already mentioned Gnostic teachings from the 2nd century, by which Attis was a 'shepherd of the stars',[652] that is, the guide of the deceased's souls on their path towards immortal life. It is quite logical that philosophical doctrines of the 2nd century mirrored the religious beliefs of Metroac worshippers in the representations of Attis with a *pedum* on funerary monuments, where the god is, according to Gnostic beliefs, a shepherd of the dead souls.[653] From the middle of the 2nd and during the 3rd century, as Arnobius and Macrobius state, two more aspects are added to Attis – a solar and a celestial function. While his solar dimension is not attested on funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image, the god's celestial character can be presumed in some of the *Attis tristis* images from funerary monuments dated between the second half of the 2nd century and in the 3rd century. Analogous to other monuments on which the celestial dimension of Attis is presented, on funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* figure, the god also symbolised the beginning of a new and eternal life.[654] Therefore, the image of *Attis tristis* could be associated with his chthonian character and the role of *psychopompos*, but also with his celestial dimension on funerary monuments from the Central Balkans' Roman provinces. Nevertheless, on certain funerary monuments, his image also contained a reference to his aspect of a vegetation god and the protector of fields and pasture.[655] Attis' dimension of a vegetation deity was added to the god in the Roman period and is confirmed with iconographic motifs of pine tree, almonds and violets (mentioned only in the Phrygian version of Attis' myth). However, all these vegetative symbols in the myth originated from Attis' blood or from Magna Mater's tears, which is why the god is compared with flowers picked before they bloom, in written sources from the Christian period. This symbolism was clear to philosophers and educated people, but to ordinary people who venerated Attis and did not possess a deeper knowledge of the cult's mythology, representations of the god as a Phrygian shepherd with a *pedum* were comprehended as images of a vegetation and fertility deity. Of course, venerating Attis as a vegetation god in the Roman period was related to his symbolism of a god associated with death and rebirth, as his festivities were celebrated during the first days of Spring when Nature awakens from the winter sleep. The aspect of Attis as a vegetation deity is mirrored on a relief from Pridraga, near Novigrad, dated to the 3rd-4th century, where the

[647] Espérandieu 1949: 11, n. 7851.

[648] Medini 1981: 138; Којић 1963: 228-229: Зотовић 1969: 436.

[649] Cumont 1942: 341, 391. In Hellenistic art, the type of so-called funerary Erotes appears, who hold in one hand a torch turned downwards, which in F. Cumont opinion symbolizes the end of life and imprisoning of the deceased's soul in the Underworld, Ibid: 409.

[650] For a detailed discussion about the analogies between the turned downwards pedum from *Attis tristis* image and turned downwards torch from the presentations of the winged genius of death and dadophors, see Medini 1981: 136-143.

[651] The function of *psychopompos*, Roman god Mercury takes over from Greek god Hermes, who very early on becomes connected with the Underworld and the souls of the dead. In Homer's Odissey, Hermes is the gatherer of the deceased' souls, which is an allusion to his later epithet *pompos*, the leader of souls, Kerenyi 1987: 8-9. The analyses of iconographic presentations of Hermes with winged petasos, caduceus and winged sandals, showed that as a psychopompos, Hermes is presented in the described way, Siebert 1990: 384-385. Some of the examples are the scene from Rome sarcophagus, where Mercury, Pluto and Proserpine are presented, or the scene from the Louvre sarcophagus, where Mercury leading a soul of the deceased is presented, Cumont 1966: 29, 319.

[652] Graillot 1912: 213.

[653] Hippolytus writes that Attis became immortal by passing through the doors of Heaven, as that the ones who don't pass through Heaven's gate, stay forever dead, Graillot 1912: 406. It is logical to presume that Metroac believers, acquainted with the teachings of Gnostic sect Naassenes, expected the same destiny that god Attis by their teachings had – that by passing with the god through the doors of Heaven, they achieve immortality.

[654] Medini 1981: 163.

[655] Not returning to J. G. Frazer's interpretation of Attis as vegetation *numen,* although U. Bianchi and G. Sfameni Gasparro too think that Attis primarily was a vegetation god, Lancellotti 2002: 86. In Greek and Roman culture, Attis was a deity of fertility, which is known from Eusebius' and Augustine's writings, who mention that the god is similar to the spring flowers, but picked before they bloom (*flos decidit ante fructum*), Sfameni Gasparro 1985: 46. This allusion to the god as the symbol of fertility and vegetation is visible in the Attis' presentations with a cornucopia, as bronze statuette from Britannia, Harris, Harris 1965: 101-102, a basket of flowers, a bronze statuette from Madrid and terracotta from Kyme, Vermaseren 1966: 16, with pine cones like in two figurines from Delos, Ibid: 52, but also with violets in marble statuette from Athens, *CCCA* II, 39-40, num. 135.

god is syncretised with Silvanus.[656] The relief shows Silvanus' figure en face, holding a syrinx in his raised right hand, dressed in a tunica, with a Phrygian hat on his head. The figure is bearded, as is the god Silvanus, with a goat, the typical animal companion of Silvanus, on its right side. The reason for the syncretism between the two deities is simple – they are both shepherds, both carry a pedum and a syrinx, and their nature and characters are alike. However, as N. Cambi and J. Medini noticed, the reasons for syncretistic Silvanus/Attis representation from Pridraga were based primarily on the spiritual needs of the population that inhabited the eastern parts of the province of Dalmatia,[657] who expressed their beliefs in Attis as the god of vegetation. This hypothesis is attested on funerary monuments as well – on lateral sides of monuments from Užice, Klašnik and Rogatica, instead of an *Attis tristis* image, a tree is presented as the god's substitute.[658] However, one must be careful when presuming that funerary monuments with the motif of a pine cone or pine tree also represent vegetative substitutes of Attis' image.[659] As P. F. Dorcey shows, these attributes could easily indicate cults of some other deities, like Dionysus or Silvanus,[660] particularly if the whole context of the monument in question does not indicate the cult of Attis.

On the wider territory of Višegrad and Užice, in the localities of Visibaba, Vranjani and Kalenić, all first three iconographic types of the *Attis tristis* motif were attested on funerary monuments. On the monuments with inscriptions, very frequently decurions are mentioned (some of whom died in Salona, like Titus Aelius Martialis and Publius Aelius Quintilianus, from the locality Visibabe), which clearly implies constant cultural contact between important the Metroac centre of Salona and the interior of the western parts of the Central Balkans. As members of the upper class, decurions were in a position to communicate visually with the ordinary population by favouring the *Attis tristis* image and, thus, spread the iconographic motif through the smaller localities. On the other hand, the majority of funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image are dated to the second half of the 2nd and the 3rd century, which is the period when the Metroac cult strengthened (after the reorganisation of the cult by Antoninus Pius and, later, thanks to the favouring of the cult by the Severi dynasty) and when decurions and other members of the municipal government were inclined towards cults propagated in Roman imperial ideology. The presence of vegetative ornaments like a kantharos with a grapevine and grapes on the funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image underlined the idea of death and rebirth and, thus, emphasised the deeper religious dimension of the god's image.[661] Of course, this suggestion can be made only regarding particular monuments, where its complete context (inscription and iconography) can imply such a deduction.

Funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image holding a downward turned torch can be interpreted in different ways (again, the presence of an inscription and other iconographic motif are important for a more accurate interpretation). The attribute of a torch implies a chthonian character of the god and his image as a symbol of grief and sorrow, or it indicates Attis' celestial dimension and the deity's symbol of resurrection and eternal life. This is particularly true for funerary monuments discovered in the wider territory of Komini, Pljevlja (Municipium S), Kolovrat (Prijepolje), but also for isolated examples like monuments from the localities of Visibabe, Karan, Otanj, Rudo, Nova Varoš and Nefertara, where the attribute of a torch can imply different religious aspects of the god Attis, but also the influence of Mithraistic iconography or the winged genius of death.[662] In the locality of Lisičjak ('Grčko groblje') a larger Antique necropolis was archaeologically attested, where, beside a funerary cippus with an image of *Attis tristis* on the lateral sides, a votive altar dedicated to the god Mithras was found. Thus, the existence of Mithras' cult in the same area that funerary monuments with the motif of *Attis tristis* were attested might imply a syncretism between their iconographies and religious aspects.[663] In that context, a funerary monument with an *Attis tristis* image from Komini is particularly interesting, because on one lateral side Attis is presented with a torch pointed up, while on the other lateral side Attis is holding a torch turned upside down (cat. 25). This iconography

[656] M. and D. Garašanin interpret presentations of Attis on funerary monuments from western Central Balkans, as syncretistic images of Attis and Silvanus. R. Zotović also thinks that due to the equation with god Silvanus, Attis was so popular in mentioned parts, Зотовић 1995: 67-68.

[657] Cambi 1968: 139; Medini 1981: 374-375. Lj. Perinić suggests that the syncretism of Silvanus and Attis on the Pridraga relief probably presents a result of the recognition of the pastoral and healing elements of both gods, Perinić 2016: 37-39.

[658] Зотовић 1995: 67.

[659] Ch. Picard and M. J. Vermaseren associated funerary monuments with a motif of a pine cone or a pine tree with god Attis, Picard 1954: 93-95; Vermaseren 1977: 143.

[660] Dorcey 1992: 17.

[661] Vegetable motives of grapevine, grapes, garland, kantharos with grapevine, symbolize the hope in resurrection and Afterlife and their presence on funerary monument with *Attis tristis* image, only underlines god's soteriological and eschatological dimensions, Kondić 1965: 167-182.

[662] Funerary monuments with representations of the winged genius of death presented on lateral sides, have been found in localities where also funerary monuments with *Attis tristis* image have been confirmed and the possibility of kind of syncretism between two iconographies can't be excluded, with a note that symbolism of mentioned motives is, in that case, the same – the winged genius of death and *Attis tristis* symbolize the sadness because of the loved one's loss and not the hope in his/her's resurrection and immortality in Afterlife.

[663] A limestone votive altar with a dedication to the god Mithras was found in the area of a bigger Antique necropolis in the locality Lisičjak, Grčko groblje. The inscription reads: *I(nvicto) S(oli) M(ithrae) o(mniputenti) I Aur(elius) Urso | R(ufi) f(ilius)*, Лома 2010: 15.

clearly implies the direct iconographic influence of Mithra's cult, where Cautes is holding a raised torch, while Cautopates holds a torch turned down. J. Medini thinks that the attribute of a torch shown on funerary monuments from the interior of western parts of the Central Balkans, symbolised the end of the deceased's life, without any other deeper religious meaning, because it is unlikely that ordinary residents possessed a deeper knowledge of the Metroac or Mithras cult. I do not agree with this opinion, because there is no reason why some inhabitants of rural areas could not have been knowledgeable of the Metroac or Mithras' cult, particularly since some of the dedicants were veterans who, after finishing active service in the army, lived in smaller centres, but during their service lived in larger urban centres where they could have come into closer contact with the theology of Magna Mater and Attis cult, as well as with Mithraism.

Among funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image, particularly interesting are those where the god is presented with the palm of his hand open and turned to the viewer, sometimes near his cheek (cat. 30). F. Cumont explains that this palm position indicates sorrow and sadness for the deceased,[664] while it is known that in the religions of other Asia Minor deities, this gesture is interpreted as god's blessing, as in the case of the god Sabazius.[665] On a certain number of Gallic funerary monuments, *Attis tristis* images are presented with one arm raised and with an open palm, turned to the viewer. These presentations are interpreted as the god's blessing for the deceased, therefore, it is probable that on Central Balkan funerary monuments, these *Attis tristis* images contain the same symbolism – god's blessing to the deceased on his departure to eternal life.

The fact that the image of *Attis tristis* is present not only in the cippus type of funerary monuments, but also on a stele from Kolovrat and on a pyramidal funerary monument from Karan, combined with the variation of the form of the stele in the context of the widening of its lateral sides to create more space for presenting different motifs or scenes, implies that in the indigenous population of western parts of the Central Balkans a firm acceptance of canonical forms of Roman funerary art did not exist.[666]

We considered 17 monuments with *Attis tristis*' image, where the inscriptions are preserved. Decurions are mostly mentioned, either as the ones who erected a monument for their deceased one or as the ones who are mentioned as the deceased. After decurions, persons of presumably Asia Minor, Greek and indigenous origin, but with Roman citizenship, are mentioned. Since the presence of the army was not so prominent in the western parts of the Central Balkans (several inscriptions attest to the presence of cohorts I and II miliaria Delmatorum, grouped on the right side of the river Drina to the boundary with the province of Moesia Superior) and since there are no archaeological remains of military camps which were built from solid material and which lasted longer, it seems that the image of *Attis tristis* was spread in this territory among the indigenous population by the elite of the *municipii* - decurions. Due to the similarities in the iconographies of the god Attis and the gods Silvanus and Mithras, the image of *Attis tristis* was favoured among the indigenous inhabitants, who also accepted all three gods as divine herdsmen, an image which was well known and familiar in these rural parts.

A different situation with the images of *Attis tristis* is, however, attested in the area of Viminacium, where several different types of funerary monuments bear the motif (cat. 54-58). Since, unfortunately, only one of them can be dated with any precision to the late 2nd century (the funerary cipus of Marcus Antonius Fabianus), we cannot presume the earliest period when *Attis tristis* image appeared in Viminacium, but we can assume a possible relationship between the image and soldiers of Legion VII Claudia, which was first stationed in Tilurium, where the *Attis tristis* image first appeared on one of the funerary stelae associated with a soldier of the Legion. The Legion VII Claudia was transferred to Viminacium in the period between 63 and 66, so it is possible that the *Attis tristis* image was spread through the area by soldiers who were already acquainted with it. Nevertheless, beside the army, the image of *Attis tristis* could also have been transferred from the province of Dalmatia to Viminacium through other social groups (like merchants, artisans, freedmen, etc.), because the Asia Minor ethnicity has been repeatedly attested in epigraphic and archaeological monuments from Viminacium and its wider area.

It is easy to understand the acceptance and support of the official Roman ideology that first recognised the importance of Magna Mater's cult to the Roman state and that then, from the reign of Claudius, who included the god Attis in the Roman pantheon and placed his cult under one of Rome's priestly *collegia*, the cult of the goddess' paredros was favoured not only by immigrants of Asia Minor origin, but also by Romanised indigenous residents. On none of the monuments with the inscription can we be certain which person was most probably of Oriental origin, but it is clear that the persons who erected funerary monuments expressed their association either with their homeland or with the symbolism that *Attis tristis* carried in their comprehension or their wish to, by accepting the iconographic motif, secure an easier integration into the local community.

[664] Cumont 1942: 222.
[665] Johnson 1984: 1595.
[666] Зотовић 2011: 213.

The symbolism of other representations of the god Attis from the Central Balkans seems easier to be determined than is the case with funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image. The symbolism of a bronze statuette of unknown provenience, which, in my opinion, represents the genius of death shown as the god Attis, implies a belief in new birth and immortality (cat. 59). This suggestion would be supported further by the symbolism of hope in rebirth and eternal life, which the genius of winter on Roman sarcophagi possessed.[667]

Beside the bronze appliqué in the shape of Attis' bust from Ritopek (cat. 60), for two remaining finds of the same kind and of unknown provenience (cat. 61-62), it is hard to presume whether they, as analogous finds from localities in other Roman provinces, were found inside a grave or in the area of a civil settlement or military camp.[668]

Analysing the appliqués in the shape of Attis' bust from the territory of the province of Dalmatia, J. Medini noted that the majority of appliqués were used as grave goods, which would imply a chthonian character of these objects.[669] If we were to presume this context in the case of the three appliqués from the Central Balkans, the next step would be to assume that they were put in the deceased's grave to secure the protection of Attis in the Afterlife. Following this line of thinking, the appliqués in the shape of Attis' bust also had apotropaic, as well as eschatological symbolism. However, on Central Balkan appliqués in the shape of Attis' bust, a detail that J. Medini found on examples from the province of Dalmatia and which provided him with the grounds to presume their apotropaic and eschatological dimension was not confirmed. On Attis' hat, on one of the appliqués found in Nin (Aenona) in Dalmatia, a number of small holes were drilled, placed in parallel rows or in the shape of the letters L and I. J. Medini interpreted the holes as representations of stars, which would imply Attis' celestial character and his eschatological dimension.[670] On the hat of another appliqué in the shape of Attis' bust, from Burnum, an eight-pointed star is presented, which J. Medini again interpreted as an implication of Attis' celestial character.[671] In this context, a very interesting find of Attis' head, which belonged to a smaller than life-size statue of the god, found in Medviđa, Antique Hadra, in the province Dalmatia, should be mentioned. Just between the deity's forehead and his Phrygian hat, some 40 round holes were shallowly drilled.[672] These small holes were used to hold different flowers, pine branches and corn ears during Metroac festivities, when Attis's statues were adorned in the mentioned way, similar to the god's reclining statue from Attideum in Ostia, where the deity's head is crowned with flowers, corn ears, pine cones and poppies.[673] Therefore, it is possible that the holes on the appliqué from Nin, might actually represent copies of the holes presented in Attis' cap on sculptural and statuary finds, where the god's devotees put flowers and leaves, to adorn the image of the god during festivities in his honour.[674] In the context of Central Balkan appliqués in the shape of Attis' bust, the similar implication of Attis' eschatological character could, perhaps, be presumed. It seems logical to draw the analogy with presentations of so-called Attis' masks from Roman sarcophagi from the 2nd and the 3rd century, which are iconographically very similar to appliqués in the shape of Attis' bust, and which carried clear apotropaic and eschatological symbolisms.[675] Another possibility, that the Central Balkan appliqués had a purely decorative function has to be mentioned (they could have adorned furniture, for example), because their context of finding is unknown.

The last archaeological monument presenting the god Attis, contains clear symbolism (cat. 63). A fragmented terracotta in the shape of the god Attis was found in the sacrificial horizon above one of the tombs at the 'Više grobalja' necropolis in Viminacium, meaning its primarily chthonian and eschatological character can be presumed with a reasonable degree of certainty, perhaps even the deceased was a believer in the

[667] Turcan 1966: 595-598.

[668] The group of bronze appliques in the shape of Attis' bust from Nin (antique Aenona) was discovered in graves along with applique from Biograd, as J. Medini also presumes for appliques from Salona and Ekvum. Two appliques in the shape of Attis' bust, were found in military camp Burnum, but we don't possess the information where exactly were they found (grave or not), Medini 1985/86: 113-114; Medini 1989: 255.

[669] J. Medini connects the chthonian connotation of appliques in the shape of Attis' bust with the symbolism of *Attis tristis* motif on funerary monuments from western parts of Central Balkans. The author draws the analogy, because he presumes that the same spiritual and religious needs of the inhabitants of these parts led to the production of appliques in the shape of Attis' bust, which were later put in the grave of deceased. Also, J. Medini reminds of the chthonian character of Attis' statuettes from Amphipolis and Kyme, in his opinion grave goods, which imply the beliefs of the deceased, Medini 1985/6: 118-119.

[670] Ibid: 117.

[671] The author mentions that the motif of a star on Attis' hat is in the iconography of so-far known appliques from Rome and provinces, unknown detail. As the motif of the starry sky on Attis' hat on Nin applique, in J. Medini's opinion, the motif of a star symbolizes the power that Magna Mater gives to Attis, over the stars and sky (Julian's words from his Hymn to the Mother of the Gods), Medini 1989: 258.

[672] Medini 1976-1977: 196-197.

[673] As it was already mentioned, the marble statue of Reclining Attis was found in the Attideum in 1867-1868. year (now in the Lateran museum) and was dedicated by Gaius Cartilius Euplus in the 2nd century. Iconographic syncretism with different deities like Dionysus, but also solar and lunar gods like god Mēn is visible in the solar rays in god's tiara and a crescent on its top. The representation of the god is interpreted not as of a dying deity, but of a victorious one due to his celestial dimension, Vermaseren 1966: 36; Lancellotti 2002: 139, ft. 80.

[674] For example on Attis terracotta from Delos, where around the god's hat, leaves are presented. M. J. Vermaseren explains that the holes in other archaeological kinds of monuments originated from the holes in statuettes of god Attis, where leaves and flowers were put, during god's festivities, *CCCA* II, num. 616.

[675] Mucznik 1999: 74.

Metroac cult.[676] Similar finds are known from Aphipolis and Kyme, in the same context.[677]

On the Central Balkans territory, thus far no sanctuary or shrine dedicated to the god Attis has been confirmed, but we cannot overlook the possibility that the god had a shrine in or near a temple of Magna Mater, if one existed in Viminacium. The question of Attis' worshippers has been tackled in discussions regarding Magna Mater's cult and funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image – they were mostly of the Romanised indigenous inhabitants who were drawn to the symbolism of the god and were of different professions, probably soldiers, veterans, decurions, freedmen, merchants, etc. However, the more important question is: what symbolism did the god Attis have for their worshippers in the Central Balkans territory? Since the majority of the archaeological material consists of funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis*' image, it is inevitable that we would ask ourselves about the reason for the popularity of this particular motif in certain parts of the territory. Beside all the reasons I have already mentioned, like the familiarity of Attis' image (the figure of a shepherd) to the residents of the Central Balkans and the possible syncretism with some unknown indigenous god or gods, but also the attested syncretism with the favoured gods Silvanus, Dionysus/Liber and Mithras, the question of a particular visual and, perhaps, symbolic message that was contained in the motif poses itself. Could it be that the image of the god transferred a message of the salvation of his followers in the local sphere of ordinary life?[678] The imagery and varieties of the basic iconographical type of *Attis tristis,* attested in Central Balkan funerary monuments, in my opinion, contain that message, rather than the message of the belief in eternal life. Whether some of the deceased were worshippers of the god or not is of secondary importance, because it seems that the beliefs and wishes of those who erected funerary monuments for their loved deceased ones, were primarily directed not towards the desire for their Afterlife, but more probably for the salvation of their souls and the celebration of their lives, such as they were.

As I mentioned at the beginning of the discussion of Attis' monuments and the god's cult in the Central Balkans, what impedes a more precise interpretation of his possible worshippers, their professions andsocial class, is the fact that a number of monuments have been destroyed or lost and those that still exists have almost always either been deliberately damaged or their condition has deteriorated over time. Those funerary monuments on which the motif of *Attis tristis* was purposely damaged were most probably subjected to damage in the period of Late Antiquity, when iconographic presentations of Magna Mater and Attis were deliberately sacrileged or destroyed by Christians, because of their religious message and dogma, which endangered Christian beliefs. The question as to whether the deities were worshipped together in the Central Balkans territory is without a valid answer thus far. I have already mentioned that in the western parts of the territory, where no monuments of Magna Mater have been discovered, numerous monuments with an *Attis tristis* image have been found. I do not think that this occurrence is accidental, but whether the cult of the Phrygian goddess was substituted with the cult of her paredros, remains only a hypothesis. Perhaps the opposite can be presumed, that the fact that, in the Central Balkans territory, no finds belonging to both cults in any localities have been constated, like they were, for example, in the neighbouring province of Dalmatia in the locality of Burnum,[679] could imply that Magna Mater and Attis were venerated in central parts of the Balkans as separate deities, which would be partially supported with the different parts of the territory where their monuments have been discovered. I say partially, because on the territory of some localities like Viminacium, the cult of Magna Mater was epigraphically attested, as funerary monuments with the image of *Attis tristis* and stone lion statues with a ram's head under one paw have been discovered. This suggestion would be supported by the different nature of the two cults – Magna Mater's cult was official and publicly honoured, while the god Attis was obviously accepted as a deity of similar character to an unknown indigenous god or gods of fertility, vegetation, fields and woods and was venerated privately. The latest archaeological monuments of the god Attis on the Central Balkans territory are dated to the end of the 3rd century, after which traces of his image and perhaps religious dimension are only visible in the *Attis tristis* motif on funerary monuments.

[676] M. J. Vermasseren suggests that Attis' terracottas found in Amphipolis' necropolis 'were offered as gifts to the dead', thus connecting them directly to the religious beliefs of the deceased, Vermasseren 1977: 17-18.

[677] V. Tran Tam Tinh mentions Attis' terracottas found in the necropolis of Amphipolis similar to terracottas presenting the god from locality Kyme dated to the 1st century. The author believes that they were put beside the deceased, so that he/she could as Attis 'resurrect', that is that the cult objects which symbolically contained a hope in rebirth an immortal Afterlife, Tran Tam Tinh 1972: 90

[678] J. North agrees with previous authors like U. Bianchi, G. Sfameni Gasparro and J. Z. Smith, who showed independently that the main message of Attis' cult wasn't rebirth and hope for the immortal life, but rather salvation which his worshippers can achieve as god did, but not in Afterlife, than in the life that they lead until they die, North 2013: 116.

[679] The sanctuary of Magna Mater in Burnum was located in the western part of the so-called younger pretorium. During the archaeological excavations, fragments of monumental frieze with mythological scenes of the goddess and Attis were discovered. Presumably, there were at least four scenes (divided mutually with a plastic band) on which is Magna Mater half-turned to Attis who sits under the pine tree and figures of Attis tristis are shown. The sanctuary is dated to the period of Antoninus Pius, Medini 1981: 200-201, 510, num. 24.

3. Sabazius

3.1. The Cult of Sabazius in Graeco-Roman culture

As another Asia Minor deity, whose cult was prominent in different parts of the Roman Empire, the god Sabazius was one of the gods whose cult was favoured in the Central Balkans, particularly in its eastern parts, because of the Thracian influence.[680] In scholarly literature, opinions have been divided for a long time between the presumption as to whether Sabazius was a Phrygian god or not, while in contemporary literature, most authors agree on the Phrygian origin of the deity whose cult spread to Thrace and further across the Roman Empire.[681] This debate originated from the works of different ancient writers, where the majority of them presented Sabazius in a similar way to Dionysus, except Macrobius, who connected the god with the Thracians.[682] In the earliest mentions of the god, his name is not known – Demosthenes writes in *De Corona* about the cry εύοί ςαβοί, but not in the context of the deity's name.[683] Until the last mention of the god in Teophrastus, until the 1st century BC, ancient writers were silent on the question of the god's name or ritual practices performed in his honour. The earliest mention of the god Sabazius is known from Aristophanes, where the god is associated with flutes, Korybants, Magna Mater (Mother of the Gods) and Adonis.[684] In his homeland of Anatolia, Sabazius is known from the inscription attested in Sardes, dated to the 4th century BC, in which the governor of Lydia forbids the participation in the mysteries of Sabazius.[685] The god is mentioned again in the inscription of Attalus III, dated to 135-4 BC, which records the official instalment of the deity's cult in Pergamon.[686] Another inscription, dated to the 1st century BC, expresses the gratitude of the city functionaries to Sabazius' priest because of his various, praiseworthy deeds.[687] During the Hellenistic period, and later, the Sabazius cult was confirmed in many centres of Lydia and Maeonia,[688] while only two monuments are known from Phrygia, which is strange, if Sabazius really was a Phrygian god. M. Ricl, however, thinks that this should not be surprising, considering an analogy in the cult of Asia Minor's god Mēn, who was also called a Phrygian deity in works of ancient writers, but the majority of his monuments was found in north-eastern Lydia.[689] The earliest archaeological find bearing the name of Sabazios is a black-glazed skyphos, with the graffito ΙΕΡΑ ΣΑΒΑΖΙΟΥ, found at Panskoye on the northern shore of the Black Sea, dated to 325-300 BC.[690] During the Hellenistic period, Sabazius' cult was confirmed on Rhodes, Theos, Piraeus, Thera, Sikinos

[680] Dionysus was one of the most popular gods in Thrace and because of his close connection to god Sabazius, the latter deity was also favoured in the territory of the province, Rabadjiev 2015: 444-456.

[681] Authors like T. Eisele, H. Schaefer, F. Cumont, Ch. Picard and M. Macrea thought that Sabazius was a Thracian deity, that is a god of Thracian-Phrygian tribes, unlike the authors of later studies who presume that the god was of Phrygian origin, Eisele 1909: 232-264; Schaefer 1920: 1540-1551; Cumont 1942: 60; Picard 1961: 131; Macrea 1959: 329. M. Tatscheva-Hitova's opinion is that the Phrygian tribes brought the cult of Sabazius to Thrace, where under the influence of indigenous religion, the cult transformed, Tatscheva-Hitova 1978: 1217-1231. Reminding of earlier scholarly attitudes by which Sabazius was a Thracian deity whose cult was Phrygian, Sh. E. Johnson asks why it couldn't be presumed that god's origin was Anatolian, Johnson 1984: 1587; R. Turcan considers the god as Thracian-Phrygian deity and emphasies his Asia Minor character, Turcan 1996: 315-316. R. Gicheva thinks that Sabazius was of Anatolian (Phrygian) origin as also L. E. Roller presumes (from western Anatolia), Gicheva 1997: 1069; Roller 2001: http://www.stoa.org/texts/2001/01/0008/

[682] The earliest mention of Sabazius is known from Aristophanus' comedies in which the writer mocks the god and presents him as an orgiastic god similar to Dionysus and that in the centre of his rituals are tympanum and wine, Johnson 1984: 1587. Demosthenes also writes about Sabazius in a negative context, where he describes his political opponent Aeschines who was Sabazius' worshipper and that god's followers celebrating the deity walked the streets holding snake above their heads and shouting *Euoi Saboi*. Due to Demosthenes' detailed description, celebrations in honour of Sabazius performed in Greece are known to us, with certain details which imply analogies with Dionysus cult, like fawn-skin, wine, snake, ecstatic dance, ivy and the ritual of initiation, Versnel 1998: 114-115. About 343 BC in Athens, the priestess of Sabazius, Ninos, was sentenced to death because she propagated his cult, Roller 1999: 168. Teophrastus also mentions Sabazius in a negative context, mocking to one of his characters who makes himself look attractive for Sabazius festivities and sneers at a superstitious man who calls god's name when he sees a snake. The author also mentions the initiation of Sabazius believers, which implies that in the 4th century BC mystery rituals connected to the god's cult were performed with the promise of new birth and eternal life, *CCIS* III: 4. Macrobius cites Alexander Polyhistor's mention of Sabazius' temple on the hill Zilmisu in Thrace and that Thracians venerated mutual cult of Helios and Liber, under the name Sabazius, Tacheva-Hitova 1983: 187-188.

[683] Demosthenes, *De Corona* 259-260.

[684] *CCIS* III, 1.

[685] Jonhson 1984: 1587; Lane 1979: 37-38; Johnson 1984: 1588-1589; *CCIS* III: 2-6.

[686] The inscription of Attalus III is important because it establishes Sabazius' cult in Pergamon and states that the sanctuary of the god will be inside the temple of Athena Nikephoros, as the rituals of sacrifice and celebrations in honour of the god are permitted. The priest of god Sabazius is also mentioned in the inscription, which function was hereditary, *CCIS* III, 5.

[687] The honourary inscription from Tlos is damaged so the name of the person who is praised isn't known, however he is mentioned as the one who excelled in the wars and helped to save old laws and the city's democracy, and who was also a Sabazius priest for life, Ibid: 6.

[688] The cult of god Sabazius is confirmed in Asia Minor with over 37 inscriptions found in Phrygia, Mysia, Bithynia, Ionia, Lydia, Maeonia, Caballia and Lycia. Over 50 inscriptions are discovered from the territories of other Roman provinces, Ricl 1995: 41.

[689] M. Ricl explains this paradox with Lydian's favouring of the orgiastic cults, Ibid: 42.

[690] L. Hannestad presumes that the graffito could be translated as 'the sacred cup of Sabazios', Hannestad 2002: 148.

and Cyprus, which implies the god's popularity in The Aegean.[691] The cult of the god reached Rome in the 2nd century BC. During the reign of Tiberius, Valerius Maximus writes that in 139 BC, the *praetor peregrinus* expelled Sabazius' cult from Rome.[692] R. Turcan thinks that in Rome, Sabazius was worshipped in the temple of the Carthaginian goddess Caelestis, as in Ostia, where he was venerated with the same goddess in the later sanctuary of the god Mithras.[693] The link between the god Sabazius and the goddess Caelestis is mirrored in the fact that in North Africa Caelestis was equated with the Asia Minor goddess Magna Mater, who was closely related to Sabazius.

The name of the god Sabazius (*Σαβάζιος*) is attested in epigraphic monuments and historical sources in different forms,[694] and has also presented the grounds for scholarly polemics – one group of scholars think that the name originated from the Phrygian theonim *Sabas*, while other scholars suggest that the god's name was derived from the Latin word *sabacum*, the Illyrian word for bear - *sabaya*.[695] Different genealogies have been ascribed to the god Sabazius – Mnaseas of Patara stated that Sabazius was Dionysus' son, which was confirmed by Hesychius too. Cicero thought that Sabazius represented a form of the god Dionysus, while Diodorus Siculus explained that Sabazius was older than Dionysus, the son of Zeus and Persephone.[696] Two orphic hymns mention Sabazius' origin – one claims that he is Dionysus' father, while in another orphic hymn the god is Dionysus' son.[697] The tendency of ancient writers was to associate the gods Dionysus and Sabazius because of obvious similarities in their natures, Corybantic rites and both gods being favoured by female worshippers. However, epigraphic and archaeological monuments suggest a different opinion of the adherents of both gods – they clearly distinguished the gods and, in reality, Dionysus and Sabazius remained separate gods with their own particular ritual practices.[698] In the Roman period, the equation of the god Sabazius with the god Zeus became almost a rule, but it did not represent a novelty, since the association between gods existed as early as in the 2nd century BC, which is attested in the inscription of Attalus III, whose mother venerated the cult of Zeus Sabazius.[699] During the Roman period, the equation of Sabazius with Zeus/Jupiter is confirmed on epigraphic monuments from Thrace, Moesia Inferior, Dacia, Asia Minor, Dalmatia, Italy, Africa, Gallia, Germania and Delos,[700] but also in iconographic representations that show the close relationship between the two gods, in the motif of an eagle on Sabazius cult monuments.[701] L. E. Roller states that in Sabazius, one of the earliest manifestations of the principal male deity in the Anatolian cult can be seen, which was later identified with the god Zeus, therefore. perhaps the name Sabazius could be the regional epithet of the Phrygian Zeus.[702] Sabazius was also associated with other deities like Hermes/Mercury, Asclepius, Apollo, Mithras, Attis, Dioscures, Hercules, Mars, Silvanus and Helios, but also the god Mēn, in which case we may even speak of a certain syncretism between gods.[703] This hypothesis is strengthen with the iconography present on archaeological monuments of the god Mēn, on which the attributes of the god Sabazius are shown, but also vice versa, on the archaeological monuments of Sabazius where lunar motifs from god Mēn's iconography are shown.[704] The apparent connection between Sabazios and the Thracian horseman, and the association of Sabazios and the Danubian Riders, is attested iconographically on a votive plate from Plovdiv (Philippopolis), where the

[691] E. N. Lane states that by the opinion of S. Dow, the cult of Sabazius existed in Piraeus from the 4th century BC. S. Dow argued his hypothesis with the base of a statue dated to 342-1 year BC, on which the dedicants are members of Sabazius' cult association. However, E. N. Lane doesn't agree with S. Dow's assumption because no monument so-far, doesn't confirm the continuity of god's cult in Piraeus from the 4th century, *CCIS* III, 8.

[692] Turcan 1996: 316.

[693] R. Turcan based his opinion on three epigraphic monuments found in Capitoline - marble statuette of Fortuna or Abundance, marble table with inscription and marble plaque dedicated to Sabazius and Caelestis, *CCIS* II, 29-30, num. 58-60.

[694] Known forms of god's name are: Σεβάζιος, Σαβάδιος, Σαυάζιος, Σαάζιος, Σαβαζος, Σαβάζεος, Ζαβάζιος and Σαβάνδιος, in Latin: *Sabadius, Savadius, Sabasius, Sabazzius, Zabazius, Sabazus* and *Sebadius, CCIS* III: 38.

[695] Analysing Phrygian inscriptions from the 5th century BC with the term *Sabas,* R. Gičeva concludes that the name of Sabazius was probably derived from it, Gitcheva 1997: 1068. R. Turcan believes that Sabazius is the god of fermented juice (saba or sapa), while Sh. E. Johnson discusses different theories about the origin of Sabazius' name and cites H. A. Winkler's opinion, by which the name of the god is associated with the Armenian word *astvac* (translated *god*), Turcan 1996: 315; Johnson 1984: 1586. T. Eisele and H. Schaefer also connect god's name with the word for bear, Eisele 1909: 233; Schaefer 1920: 1541. Ammianus Marcellinus writes that *sabaia* is a drink which poor Illyrians make from barley or corn, Harrison 1991: 419.

[696] Cicero writes that Sabazius' father is Cybirus, king of Asia, while Diodorus Siculus mentions the night rituals which were the part of Sabazius' cult, *CCIS* III: 54.

[697] Orphic hymns' texts are about how Zeus transformed as bull made love to Demeter and afterwards slept disguised in snake's form with his daughter Persephone who bore him son Dionysus-Sabazius, *Orphic hymn* 45, 48; Johnson 1984: 1588; Gicheva 1997: 1069.

[698] Inscriptions from epigraphic monuments show that Sabazius is called either Zeus Sabazius, Iuppiter Sabazius (Sabazios) or with some of the epithet like *κύριος, επήκοος, paternus, sanctus, invictus,* Tacheva-Hitova 1983: 162-178; *CCIS* II: 29-30, num. 58-60.

[699] Sh. E. Johnson speculates that already on the monument from the period of Artaxerxes III, the connection between Zeus and Sabazius can be observed, since there is a mention that the worshippers of Baradatian Zeus (perhaps identified with the Persian deity Ahura Mazda) are not permitted to take part in Sabazius' mysteries, Johnson 1984: 1589.

[700] *CCIS* III: 11-12.

[701] Image of an eagle is known on Sabazius' presentations, but also as an attribute on Sabazius' votive hands, Ibid.

[702] Roller 2001: http://www.stoa.org/texts/2001/01/0008/

[703] M. Ricl argues the opinion that a certain degree of syncretism existed between two gods, leaning on Proclus who wrote that in Sabazius' mysteries, Mēn Sabazius is called upon by worshippers, Ricl 1995: 45; Proclus, II, T. 27.

[704] The image of god Mēn on the coinage of Asia Minor cities shows the symbols of staff entwined with a snake. Some examples of Sabazius's statuettes are presented with lunar motives, *CMRDM* III: 89-90.

Thracian horseman is presented with the god Sabazius or in Sabazius' votive hand from Krassen, with a figure of a Thracian horseman.[705]

For an understanding of Sabazius' mysteries, two ancient writers are crucial: Clement of Alexandria, who writes about a snake (*ὁ διά κόλπου θεός*) as a symbol of the god's rituals and Arnobius who states that during the initiation rite in rituals known as *Sebadia*, a golden snake was drawn inside the worshippers' clothes from the top and taken out at the bottom.[706] From Photius we learn that Sabazius' worshippers were referred to by the god's name *Σαβοι*[707] and it can be presumed that their initiation to Sabazius' cult was symbolically presented with their 'unification' with the god's substitute, a golden snake.[708] In this context, a bronze statue found in a military camp in Vindonissa is important, presenting a woman at the moment of sacrifice.[709] The woman is holding a patera in her right hand, while from the bottom of her dress a snake appears. R. Fellmann thinks that the detail of a snake presented under the woman's dress, implies the ritual practices performed in honour of the god Sabazius, which the author further argues with different objects found in the Vindonissa camp, like cult vessels decorated with snakes and Sabazius' votive hand.[710] For the interpretation of Sabazius' monuments, his close associations with other deities are of importance, like for example with Magna Mater. Strabo states that Sabazius is Phrygian and a child of the Great Mother, while Plutarch supposes that the Jews worship Dionysus, whom he identifies with Sabazius.[711] The Phrygian goddess and Sabazius are shown together multiple times on archaeological monuments, with the earliest representations dating from the 5th century BC, on the Attic red-figure calyx krater.[712]

The question of the supposed Jewish-pagan symbiosis in Sabazius' cult is quite complex, because scholars' different attitudes are derived from different information offered by ancient writers.[713] Discussing the question, M. Ricl writes that Ptolemy IV Philopator, who honoured Dionysus, told Jews to stay true to their religion and tattoo Dionysus' symbol of an ivy leaf, thus marking their belonging to their ethnos, while Jews who become worshippers of the god Dionysus, would obtain their civil rights. She presumes that on the basis of the homonymy *Sabazius – Sabbath*, an erroneous identification of the two terms occurred.[714] E. N. Lane suggests that because of the mistake in the later copying of historian Valerius Maximus' text, the connecting of Sabazius and the wrongly interpreted Jewish worship of the god happened.[715] F. Cumont was one of the main promoters of the theory regarding Sabazius and Jahve's syncretism. However, in current scholarly literature, his arguments are contested.[716] Authors like M. Ricl, S. Mitchell, I. A. Levinskaya and Sh. E. Johnson do not disapprove of a certain Jewish influence on Sabazius' cult or vice versa, but separate the cults completely, because on none of the thus-far known epigraphic monument is the equation of two gods attested.[717]

In Sabazius' cult, clergy of both sexes is attested. Therefore, the performing of rites in honour of the god could be witnessed both by a priest or a priestess.[718] A priest of the god Sabazius could hold his function for life, as the honorary inscription from Tlos confirms.[719]Texts from Sardis, Pergamon and Ormeleis, which are about Sabazius' mysteries, imply that his worship was limited to initiates, and what we know from ancient writers about rituals performed in the god's honour is quite similar in a way to the rituals performed in honour of Magna Mater. Aristophanes mentions an ecstatic ritual, in which Sabazius' devotees would communicate with the god either through a trance-like state or through cries followed by the loud sounds of a tympanum. As I have already mentioned, the most detailed description

[705] Boteva 2000: 114-115.
[706] Arnobius, *Adversus nationes,* V.20.
[707] Photius' citation again confirms the similarities between Sabazius and Dionysus' cults – the believers of the god Dionysus / Bacchus also called themselves by the name of the god *βάκχοι*, *CCIS* III: 56
[708] The cult of god Sabazius belonged to the orgiastic cults, like the cult of Adonis or Magna Mater and as such it carried the same religious idea and belief in resurrection and eternal life after death. Although some scholars tried to reconstruct the festivities in the Sabazius' honour, Demosthenes' description in *De Corona*, remains the most detailed source of information, Versnel 1990: 114-115.
[709] Fellmann 1981: 327.
[710] Ibid: 328.
[711] *CCIS* III: 54-55.
[712] The Attic red-figure krater from locality Ferrara, dated around 440 BC, shows Cybele with mural crown and lion behind goddess's left hand, while the male figure presented beside Cybele has a snake in his hair. Different authors discussed Ferrara krater identifying the god as Dionysus, Sabazius or Hades, Naumann 1983: 171-173. E. Simon thinks that it is Sabazius, because of the mutual Phrygian origin of the god and Cybele, but also because of the attribute of a snake which had important symbolism in god's cult. L. E. Roller believes that the male figure shown beside Cybele presents some other god, not Sabazius, Roller 1999: 152-153.
[713] For the review of opinions in scholarly literature see Johnson 1984: 1602-1607.
[714] Ricl 1995: 44-45; Belayche 2011: 162.
[715] E. N. Lane in his analysis of the writings of the late antique writer Valerius Maximus (who writes about the expelling of Sabazius' worshippers from Rome in 139 BC by the praetor peregrinus Cornelius Hispalus) discusses its accuracy. After the analysis of all relevant historical sources, E. N. Lane suggests that Valerius Maximus writes about several measures of Cornelius Hispalus, actually three of them – his expulsion of the Chaldeans from Rome, his expulsion of Sabazius' worshippers and his expulsion of the Jews. E. N. Lane's hypothesis is that someone of later copyists of Valerius Maximus evidence, made an error in copying the source and the result was that Jews were wrongly connected with Sabazius - they were presumed to be god's believers and the ones who spread his cult, Lane 1979: 35-38.
[716] F. Cumont based his theory of Sabazius-Yahveh syncretism first on the wrong interpretation of Valerius Maximus' text about 'Jews who worshipped Sabazius' and later on Plutarch's quotations (that the God of the Jews is actually Dionysus), inscriptions linking Theos Hypsistos and Sabbatistai, the tomb of Vincentius etc., Johnson 1984: 1602.
[717] Ricl 1995: 45; Lane 1979: 37; Macrea 1959: 329; Johnson 1984: 1606.
[718] Sabazius' priestess is mentioned for example in Athens, Roller 1996: 168; Versnel 1990: 115-116.
[719] *CCIS* III: 6

of Sabazius' initiation ritual is given in Demosthenes' *De Corona*, from which we learn that initiates were clothed in fawn-skins, they bathed and were then scoured with loam and bran. The very rite of initiation comprised the loud repetition of the formula 'Here I leave evil behind, here the better way I find', and probably with some other ritual gestures, the god's followers were initiated in his cult.[720] However, Sabazius could be worshipped in civic rites too, to which whole community could bear witness.[721] As L. E. Roller rightly notes, numerous private vows and offerings indicate that many believers cultivated his cult privately. As for the temples of the god, not much is known from the Roman period, but the custom of sharing a temple with other deities certainly continued from the Hellenistic period, when Sabazius shared a temple with Athena Nikephoros at Pergamon, and archaeological excavations show that he also shared a temple at Cosa, with the god Dionysus.[722] Sporadic mentions, such as those in Macrobius' passage, tell us about a temple of Sebadius on the Thracian Mount Zilmissus.[723] In Pompeii, a whole area known as the 'Complex of the Magic Rites' was used for different cultic practices dedicated to Sabazius, which is implied by the finds of two of the god's votive hands and two clay vases with different ornaments.[724] Temples of the god probably existed in Sardis, Sandal, Menye, Ayazviran, Kula (Koloe), Rhodes, Teos, Delos, Piraeus, Oxyrrhynchos, Pompeii (probably a small Sabazius shrine in a private home), and Rome, but also in Thrace - in Serdica, Augusta Traiana, Perperikon and the village of Porominovo (Kyustendil district).[725] The existence of a Sabazius sanctuary or shrine is also presumed in the *extra muros* area of Apulum in Dacia.[726]

In the context of Sabazius' iconography, T. Eisele differentiated two main groups of the god's representations, whereby the so-called Phrygian type of image belongs to the first group, while the second group of Sabazius' representations comprises images of the 'Graeco-Roman type'. The Phrygian type of iconographic representations of Sabazius comprised an image of a mature bearded man in a standing position, with a Phrygian hat on his head, dressed in an Oriental garment, accompanied by a snake, ram and/or an eagle. In the context of the ram, Sabazius is frequently shown standing with one foot on the ram's head, like on a bronze plate from Copenhagen and an ex-voto from Ampurias in Spain.[727] The usual attributes with which the god was presented were a sceptre ending with votive hand in the gesture of *benedictio latina* (gesture of blessing) and a pine cone. The 'Graeco-Roman' types of presentations encompass images of the god with attributes other than a sceptre and a pine cone.[728] E. N. Lane divided into three *corpora* all the gathered epigraphic and archaeological monuments of Sabazius and analysed the most frequent attributes on Sabazius' representations and so-called votive hands of god,[729] succeeding to determine particular iconographic types of the god's presentations. In that context, Sabazius' characteristic attributes were a snake (or a snake curled around a tree), a lizard, frog, turtle, ram's head, pine cone, pine tree, krater, syrinx, cymbals, ladder, sacrificial table (with a sacrificial knife and other offerings), busts of the gods Hermes and Sabazius' and a representation of a mother and child.[730]

Some of the attributes depicted on Sabazius' votive hands probably represented symbols of the mysteries, like a ladder, since it has been suggested that the ladder represented different levels of initiation or

[720] Versnel 1990: 114-115.
[721] Roller 2001: http://www.stoa.org/texts/2001/01/0008/
[722] *CCIS* III: 20.
[723] Ibid: 38.
[724] A so-called Pantheic hand of Sabazius, was one of the votive hands found in 'Complex of the Magic rites' in Pompeii, a rare example where the syncretistic figure of Sabazius-Mēn was presented, along with other attributes, of which a reclining woman nursing a baby is particularly important, because T. Tam Tinh thinks that the god was particularly favoured in Pompeii and Herculaneum as a protector of women in labour. This rare kind of iconographic type of Sabazius' votive hands, which contained a strong apotropaic aspect, has analogies only in another find from Pompei, one example from Herculaneum and one example found near Naples, Tam Tinh 1972: 98, 126.
[725] *CCIS* III, 46-48; Nenova, Vitov, Staikova, Alexandrova 2008: 116-119.
[726] C. Szabó assumes the existence of a possible building or shrine dedicated to Sabazius in Apulum, where the god was worshipped, based on a plaque discovered in 1912. year in the territory of 'Crişan' at Majorszőllőtelep, Szabó 2015: 144.
[727] Lane 1980: 17-18.
[728] Eisele 1909: 242. Of course, upper mentioned iconographic types of Sabazius' presentations comprehend the basic iconographic canon of a bearded, mature man which, as it can be seen from different presentations of the god, wasn't always followed – therefore we have Sabazius on Asia Minor votive monument driving in a chariot and on a relief from Blaudos, the god is performing libation, Johnson 1984: 1592. Sometimes Sabazius is riding a horse, holding a thunder and two spears or he is presented naked to the waist holding a staff and a thunderbolt with eagle beside him, like on ex-votto from Vichy. Sabazius is presented completely naked in a votive plate from Tibiscum in M. Macrea's opinion, but E. N. Lane rejects his suggestion and states that the Tibiscum presentation shows god Zeus, Macrea 1959: 336-337; Lane 1980: 11-13.
[729] Sabazius' votive hands present a particular kind of cult objects which were found in Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Danubian provinces etc. They represent small votive hands, made of metal (bronze or copper), decorated with different attributes of god, with a perforation at the base, which indicates that they were attached to wooden poles and carried in processions in honour of the god, like for example the triangular plates of Iuppiter Dolichenus. They will be discussed in more detail in the next two chapters.
[730] Beside a snake, a lizard and a frog contain a chthonian aspect, but also may be regarded as a symbol of resurrection (lizard) and apotropaic symbol (frog), *CCIS* III: 23; Lane 1980: 14. Scholars' attention was particularly drawn by the motif of a mother who breastfeeds a child, which appears in more than 17 Sabazius' votive hands and in more than seven examples, the motif is accompanied by the figure of a big bird (probably a raven or a crow). Y. Hajjar thinks that this motif represented successful birth, however E. N. Lane suggests that it could represent the mythological birth of the god, particularly indicated by the figure of an eagle accompanying mother with child, which would imply Zeus, mythological father of Sabazius, Hajjar 1978: 455; *CCIS* III: 26-27. R. Turcan agrees with E. N. Lanes assumption, Turcan 1996: 319. S. Brandt presumes that the motif of the woman with the child could also refer to cosmological beliefs or ritual of initiation in Sabazius' mysteries, Brandt 2018: 164.

that it symbolised higher aspirations for Sabazius' adherents.[731]

The most frequent epithets of the god, *Κύριος, Επήκοος, Paternus, Sanctus, Invictus* and *Conservator*, imply that Sabazius was honoured as the master of his worshippers' lives, the one who holds the power over their destiny,[732] but also as a god who protects and takes care of his believers.[733] A certain equation of Sabazius with the gods Sol and Mithras led to Sabazius being called *Invictus,* while the epithet *Conservator* suggests that his followers believed he was a saviour and protector in this life, as in the Afterlife.[734] As for the earliest aspect of the god, the presence of vegetable attributes on Sabazius presentations implies that in the earliest period of his existence, he represented a deity of fertility and that under such an aspect he was venerated, even during the Roman period, which is confirmed by 80 votive plates with Sabazius' representation, from the locality Vichy.[735] However, since the ex-votos were found in a locality with thermal springs, in Ch. Picard's opinion, Sabazius' dimension as an iatric deity could also be possible.[736] Due to the discovery of wall paintings from a Christian catacomb known as the Catacomb of Vibia, dated to the late 3rd or the early 4th century, in Via Appia in Rome (adjacent to the Christian catacombs), a closer insight into the beliefs and hopes of Sabazius' believers is possible. In four rooms, the graves of Sabazius and Mithras adherents were found, and in one chamber, the graves of Sabazius' priest Vincentius and his spouse were placed. From the inscriptions under the frescos on which Vincentius is presented, we learn that he would take all the happy times and pleasures from this world to the next, which is accentuated in the iconography of the representations of Vincentius and his spouse Vibia, indicating the hope for a new, immortal life.[737] On the wall paintings from the *arcosolium*, different scenes describing Vibias' path to the Afterlife are presented: on the left side of the vault is a scene of the abduction of Proserpina, on the top of the vault the judgment of Vibia in front of the Underworld gods (Hades, Hermes Psychopompos and Alcestis accompany Vibia), the main scene in the tympanum of the arch shows the introduction of Vibia to the banquet of the blessed in the company of the angelus bonus, and the final scene on the right side of the vault presents a funerary banquet in Vibia's honour with Vincentius dressed in Oriental clothes, who is shown in the company of six priests.[738] Although R. Turcan believes that these representations are to be interpreted as the hope of the deceased in the vision of a new and eternal life, Sh. E. Johnson suggests that on Vincentius' wall paintings a syncretism of Sabazius' and Theos Hypsistos' cult is shown, because of the presence of the angelus bonus (which, in Sh. E. Johnson's opinion, is an allusion to angels messengers of Theos Hypsistos), but also because of the holy meal of fish and rabbit, which could represent a Jewish meal in the Afterlife.[739]

3.2. Epigraphic and archaeological monuments of Sabazius in the Central Balkans

Protective archaeological excavations that lasted three years on the local road of Ravna-Debelica, from 1994 to 1996, led to the discovery of 140 graves on the left side of the road (the eastern slope of Slog Hill), belonging to the late Roman and early medieval period.[740] Although the researchers knew that this was only part of a large necropolis from the 2nd and 3rd century, belonging to the locality of Timacum Minus, where an important Roman fortification, settlement and, later, the administrative centre of the mining district developed, nobody expected the kind of burial ritus that was discovered in the late Roman necropolis, containing elements of the Dionysus/Sabazius cult, with a snake skeleton placed parallel to a buried deceased or wrapped around the right hand of the deceased.[741] Snakes played a significant role in the beliefs of the inhabitants of Timacum Minus, particularly as a part of the Dionysus/Sabazius cult, attested in epigraphic and archaeological monuments like sculptures and statues, but also stelae

[731] *CCIS* III: 33.

[732] In the context of Sabazius as the master of his worshippers' destinies, confession inscriptions are of enormous help for better insight. The name of god is mentioned on three monuments from Maeonia, which are erected because of different sins of the dedicants or members of their families, Ricl 1995: 181-184; *CCIS* III: 41-42.

[733] The majority of Sabazius dedicants makes a vow to the god for their welfare or the welfare of their family, *CCIS* III: 45. Isolated examples show the interest for other persons as well, as the inscription from Sandal where the freedmen pleas for his ex-owner or from the inscription of unknown provenience, where soldier Valerius Arulusanus makes a vow for the health and welfare of his centurion, *CCIS* II: 14, num. 32, 34, num. 71.

[734] Turcan 1996: 319.

[735] Around 80 silver ex-vottos with the image of god Sabazius were found in Vichy. The plates are of a different shape – some are triangular, some are in the shape of palm leaves or stylized branches. Sabazius is presented on them in his temple, accompanied by an eagle or on some plates, only his symbol the thunderbolt is presented together with plant motives. R. Turcan thinks that these silver plates were votive offerings to the god, because of his dimension of the master over flora and fertility, Turcan 1996: 319.

[736] C. Picard also turns the attention to a votive plate with the soldier's dedication in which *Deus Iuppiter Sabazius* is mentioned, which again confirms the equitation between gods, Picard 1962: 23.

[737] For the inscriptions from Vincentius and Vibia's tomb see *CCIS* II: 31-32, num. 65; Nillson 1949: 764-769.

[738] Vibias' path to paradise is presented in a most detailed way – she is first brought in a chariot by Pluto to the Underworld, then led by Hades, Hermes and Alcestis (the symbol of good and a loving wife) before the judges of Underworld, then after their positive decision Vibia is entering the paradise in the company of angelus bonus, where her husband waits for her in a funeral banquet, Zimmermann 2015: 464.

[739] Turcan 1996:323-325; Johnson 1984: 1605-1606.

[740] The results of archaeological excavations were published in 2005. year, Petković, Ružić, Jovanović, Vuksan, Zoffmann 2005.

[741] In the grave G. 53 a snake skeleton was placed lengthwise, parallel to the skeleton of a buried child to the right, while in the grave G. 4 of a female, snake skeleton was wrapped around the right hand of the deceased (killed before placing on the deceased's hand), Petković, Gavrilović Vitas, Miladinović-Radmilović, Ilijić 2016: 60-65.

with Dionysian motifs of ivy and a kantharos, from which the twisting vines emerge, probably produced locally.[742]

The god Sabazius, although confirmed with more archaeological monuments attesting his cult in eastern parts of the Central Balkans, was venerated in all parts of the territory. The epigraphic and archaeological material connected to the god's cult confirm that residents of Roman provinces in the Central Balkans territory favoured the deity who was venerated under different aspects and by dedicants of different origin and quite diverse social positions.

The first epigraphic monument was discovered in the locality of Kuline, in the vicinity of Timacum Minus and the dedication is made to Sabazius Paternus Augustus (cat. 1). As it is well known, the epithet Paternus signifies that the dedicant considered the god in question his ancestor and in that context his protector, but also that the dedicant and the god shared the same homeland.[743] In the Central Balkans, the epithet Paternus appears most frequently with the name of the god Jupiter, but also with the name of the genius of Jupiter Dolichenus.[744] If we are to make an analogy in the case of the Timacum Minus monument dedicated to Sabazius, in the context of the interpretation of the epithet Paternus with the monuments dedicated to Jupiter, it would be logical to assume that the dedicant of the Ravna monument, Flavius Clemes, dedicated the monument to the god of his homeland and that he was, therefore, a Romanised inhabitant of Asia Minor origin, who made a dedication for the emperors' health.[745] Discussing all so-far known epithets of the god Sabazius, E. N. Lane writes that the epithet Paternus is considered a usual one, which underlines the god's dimension as a protector and patron.[746] Together with the epithet Augustus,[747] the dedication designates Sabazius as an imperial deity in the context of the emperor having his approval and the god's close relationship with the imperial house. Because of the names of the consuls on the Ravna monument, its precise dating to 241 is possible, thus making the monument one of the latest monuments of Sabazius' cult in the Roman Empire.[748] Another epigraphic monument was discovered in the surroundings of Pirot and it is dedicated to Sabazius under the epithet *Κυρίως,* which means a master (cat. 2). As M. Tatcheva-Hitova observes, monuments dedicated to Sabazius *Κυρίως* are numerous in Thrace and Moesia Inferior, associating the god with the two most important deities of the Thracian pantheon - Zeus and Jupiter, with whose names the epithet *Κυρίως* also appears.[749] F. Cumont was the first to suggest that as *Κυρίως,* Sabazius was venerated as the supreme god and *omnipotens* master of his dedicant's lives,[750] while E. N. Lane and M. Tacheva-Hitova express a similar opinion, that the epithet designated Sabazius as a god who determined the destinies of his dedicants.[751] The formula *Αγαθη τιχη* is usual for Thracian dedications, as the name Mestrianos is of Thracian origin.[752] Therefore, there can be no doubt that the dedication to Sabazius was offered by a soldier of Thracian origin. The significant fact is that the altar was discovered on Mount Chepan, where a Thracian sanctuary dedicated to god Sabazios or the Thracian Rider, or perhaps to both deities, was.[753] The gentilicium Aurelius could determine Mestrianos' obtaining of civil rights during the reign of the emperors from the Antonini or Severi dynasties and the chronological frame of the monument's erection is the first half of the 3rd century.[754]

A marble plate discovered at the 'Više grobalja' necropolis in Viminacium unfortunately only displays the name of the god Sabazius in Greek (- - -*Σ]άβαζιν[*- - -) (cat. 3). M. Mirković reminds us of a monument discovered in Rome, on which the deity's name was written in a similar way.[755] Since Sabazius' name is written in Greek, the dedicant was probably of Thracian, Greek or Asia Minor origin, making a dedication to the god in the 2nd or 3rd century.

A fragmented bronze statuette of a tree on which Sabazius' bust, a pine cone, an eagle standing on the top

[742] A tombstone with unfinished relief of the deceased, decorated with Dionysian symbols (now in lapidarium of Regional Museum Knjaževac in Archaeo-ethno park Ravna, inv. num. 441), could testify about the local production of stelae with the mentioned type of ornaments, Petković, Gavrilović Vitas, Miladinović-Radmilović, Ilijić 2016: 75.

[743] Dedications to Zeus Patroos or Apollo Patroos suggest that they were considered ancestors of Greek families and cities as well, Bošković-Robert 2006: 271.

[744] The monuments dedicated to Jupiter Paternus are known from the localities: Singidunum, *IMS* I: 48-49, num. 9-13, 21; Ritopek, Ibid: 89, num. 80; Guberevac, Ibid: 127, num. 102; Ravna, *IMS* III/2: 65, num. 5; Rgotina, Ibid: 140-141, num.126; Niš, *IMS* IV: 76-78, num. 19-23. The epigraphic monument dedicated to *Genius Iovus Optimus Dolicenus paternus* was found in Prizren, *IlJug* 1986, 1438.

[745] P. Petrović also thinks that under the Latin name of Flavius Clemes, an inhabitant of Oriental origin was hiding, *IMS* III/2: 48.

[746] The epigraphic monuments dedicated to Sabazius *προγονικός* (epithet which alludes to the god as dedicant's ancestor) are known from Thrace and Moesia Inferior and E. N. Lane thinks that indigenous population of those two provinces, with the epithet attributed to Sabazius, wanted in that way to imply that he was the indigenous god of Thrace and Moesia Inferior, Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 184; *CCIS* III: 40.

[747] On Roman Central Balkans, *Augustus* is the epithet of gods: Jupiter, *IMS* I: 122, num. 91; Hercules, *IMS* II: 66, num. 11, *IMS* IV: 117, num. 102; Liber, *IMS* II: 73-74, num. 27; Silvanus (*Silvanus Augustus Conservator*), *IMS* I: 130, num. 108

[748] *CCIS* III: 40. Epigraphic monument from Rome, dedicated to *Deus Sabadius Sacrum*, dates from the same year, *CCIS* II: 28-29, num. 57.

[749] The epithet *Κυρίως* is attributed to Sabazius' name in the monuments from Serdica, Dragoman and Sportela, Tatcheva-Hitova: 1983: 166, num. 8, 168, num. 12, 170, num. 16.

[750] Cumont 1942: 60.

[751] E. N. Lane also states that the epithet *Κυρίως* is usual for god Mēn, in probably similar or same context, *CCIS* III: 39.

[752] Russu 1944: 145.

[753] Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 169.

[754] M. Tacheva-Hitova presumes that the votive altar was erected after the Second Parthian Legion was formed, after 212, Ibid.

[755] *CIL* VI, 142; *IMS* II: 79, num. 39.

of the tree and a snake entwined around the tree are presented, was found in Vidin (cat. 4). The presentation is quite summarily modelled, however, it is undoubtedly showing the god's bust with his usual attributes (a snake and a pine cone), which symbolise fertility and rebirth.[756] The presence of the eagle implies the already known relationship with Zeus/Jupiter,[757] strengthened with epigraphic monuments from Thrace, Moesia Inferior, Asia Minor, Dacia, Dalmatia, Italy, Africa, Gallia and Germania and with iconography present on different kinds of archaeological monuments.[758] However, the analysis of the iconography of Vidin's bronze statuette is somewhat complicated because of its fragmented state, which does not allow us to presume what the whole statuary composition looked like.[759] In that context, limited to the preserved iconographical elements of the Vidin statuette, we turned to the analogous syncretistic representations of Zeus/Jupiter-Sabazius, like those from a mould found in Jader, a bronze plaque in Copenhagen and Sabazius' bust-relief in the Vatican Museum.[760] The stylistic characteristics

Bronze bust of god Sabazius
(http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-etrusco/sala-xiv--antiquarium-romanum--bronzi--statue--vasi-e-arredi/busto-di-sabazio.html)

of the Vidin statuette imply the work of a local artisan, probably from the period of the 2nd-3rd century.

Three ivory needles with heads in the shape of Sabazius' hand are known from Roman Central Balkans localities: one needle was found on the Danube Limes locality of Trajanov most (Pontes) (cat. 5), while two needles were discovered at the 'Više grobalja' necropolis in Viminacium (cat. 6-7). Sabazius' votive hands represent a particular kind of cult object, sometimes with a dedication to a god on them,[761] with scholars having different opinions about their symbolism.[762] Without

[756] On archaeological monuments belonging to Sabazius' cult, the motif of a pine tree is frequently presented, whether beside or behind the altar or libation vessels. Sometimes only tree branches or leaves are shown. A pine cone as Sabazius' attribute probably in the earliest period of the cult, designated the god as a vegetation deity and later as a guarantee of the eternal life. A pine cone is also the attribute of the god Attis and characteristic in the iconography of chthonian deities. It is also a frequent motif in the iconography of another Asia Minor god, Mēn. A snake is Sabazius' attribute *par excellence*, bearing in mind its role in god's mythology, but also in ritual practices in god's honour, *CCIS* III: 30, 59. An image of a snake curled around a tree is a motif known from Athens' reliefs from the 3rd century BC, from where it was probably transferred to Thrace and then Moesia Superior, under strong Hellenistic influence. Of course, this motif is not exclusive for Sabazius' iconography, but also in other deities' iconographies, like a Thracian Rider, Dimitrova 2002: 213-214.

[757] The question of Sabazius' and Jupiter's syncretism was a subject of disagreement in scholarly literature – M. Macrea insists on the syncretism visible in monuments' iconography, while M. Tatcheva-Hitova points to significant popularity of the syncretistic cult of two deities in Thrace and Moesia Inferior, Macrea 1959: 336-337; Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 185-186. Sh. E. Jonson emphasises that in Anatolia, particularly in Lydia and Pergamon, Sabazius was identified with Zeus, as the altar found in the locality Henchir el-Faouar from north Africa, dedicated to Jupiter Sabazius, confirms the equitation between two gods, Johnson 1984: 1589-1590; Picard 1961: 147-148.

[758] For monuments dedicated to Zeus Sabazius see *CCIS* II: 1985. Archaeological monuments which imply the syncretism between two gods are usually Sabazius' votive hands where instead of the whole figure of an eagle, only bird's claws are shown, as also images of an eagle on bronze plaques and marble reliefs, *CCIS* II: 11.

[759] The iconography of a mould for the production of hammered Sabazius plaques (like plaques from Copenhagen, Berlin and Ampurias), dated to the end of the 1st or beginning of the 2nd to the middle of the 3rd century, found in *favissa* (underground storage place for votive objects in or near a temple) of the temple of Capitoline triad in Jader, could be of some help. The scene presented on the mould shows Sabazius standing within an aedicula, with his right foot on a ram's head, holding a pine cone. Beside him is a tree with an entwined snake and in aedicula's pediment, there is an eagle, *CCIS* II: 41, num. 87; Medini 1981: 457-470.

[760] Ibid. Similar presentations of Zeus-Sabazius are known from several Asia Minor localities like Blaudos, Coloe (Kula) and from unknown provenience, *CCIS* II: 11, num. 25, 18, num. 41, 21-22, num. 45. Bronze plaque from Copenhagen was probably found in Rome and it presents Sabazius inside the aedicule, with a pine cone in one hand and a sceptre in the other hand. Beside the god, a tree with an entwined snake and an eagle holding a wreath in his beak are shown, *CCIS* II: 38-39, num. 80. Sabazius' bust-relief from Vatican Museums, found in Volsinii (Bolsena), presents the bearded and barechested god, with a cloak on his left shoulder, holding a pine cone and a branch with an entwined snake. An eagle stands on his right shoulder, while at the bottom attributes like eight-part offering cake, scene of tauroctony, a krater and a ram's head, are presented, Ibid: 40, num. 84.

[761] Lane 1980: 13.

[762] The first author who gathered all then known finds of Sabazius' votive hands and introduced the term *benedictio latina,* K. Blinkenberg thought that their characteristic gesture of *benedictio latina* implied that the hands were the instruments of divine power, a symbol of god's goodness and protection from bad influences, ghosts, but also a symbol of healing. Therefore, the cult object wouldn't be *manus orans vel voventis,* but *manus dei,* Hajjar 1978: 468. H. P. L'Orange however didn't accept that opinion and thinks that votive objects symbolize certain expression or speech, Ibid: 469. Other authors thought that three fingers from Sabazius' votive hands symbolize a triad made

Votive hand of Sabazius
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabazios#/media/File:HandOfSabazius.JPG)

exception, all finds of Sabazius' votive hands (there are around 80 examples)[763] are made from metal (bronze or copper) and present the right hand bent into the shape of the gesture *benedictio latina* (the thumb, index finger and middle finger are extended, while the ring finger and little finger are folded into the palm).[764] On so-far known iconographic representations, Sabazius is usually making the gesture with his right hand and it is known that by the Roman Imperial period, the gesture was already a part of the established iconography of the god.[765] Different authors have discussed the question of how the gesture of *benedictio latina* was incorporated into Sabazius' iconography, one of the more recent ones being D. Boteva, who continues the hypothesis of M. Tatcheva-Hitova, whereby the gesture of *benedictio latina* mirrors a hand holding the attribute of a pine cone, which symbolised the divine hand symbolically giving, through the pine cone, fertility to plants.[766] D. Boteva develops the idea further by illustrating, with several examples of Neo-Assyrian winged genii holding a pine cone, her own idea of *benedictio latina* present already in Neo-Assyrian reliefs, but also suggesting that the gesture could have been transmitted from North Syria to Sabazius' iconography.[767]

Two prevailing hypotheses regarding from where the gesture *benedictio latina* was transferred to Sabazius' iconography exist in scholarly literature – that it came from the Semitic area and was introduced into Sabazius' cult by Jews from Anatolia or that it was transferred from Syria, which is more probable because Roman soldiers stationed in Syria or south-east Anatolia after 64 BC could have been acquainted with hand images on poles as cult objects and then transferred and spread that custom through the Mediterranean.[768] I would agree with the latter hypothesis, because the tradition of the cultic standard, known as *semeion* (*σημήϊον*), whose appearance was similar to the Roman military *signa*, is known from different Near Eastern cults and religious centres in Syria and Asia Minor and can be seen, for example, on the votive relief of Hadad and Atargatis from Dura-Europos, where between two deities a decorated pole with three discs and a golden dove on the top is shown.[769] Here, a brief digression is needed regarding my previously stated hypothesis: cultic standards presented on triangular Jupiter Dolichenus votive plates[770] are very similar to the so-

of Sabazius, Persephone and Zagreus or that they symbolized the offerings to the god, because of a certain vow made to him, Ibid: 470; Paškvalin 1960-1961: 206. C. Picard also thought that the objects presented god's blessing and protection, while M. Tatcheva-Hitova concludes that Sabazius'votive hands at first presented the allusion to fertility in plants' world and later god's rules and god's thought, Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 188. Sh. E. Johnson is of a similar opinion, that the objects symbolized god's power but also a sacred formula which was spoken during the blessing of a dedicant, Johnson 1984: 1595.

763 To so-far known around 80 votive hands of Sabazius, 14 figurines or busts should be added which were presumably attached to the hands, Brandt 2018: 153.

764 Sabazius' votive hands, as the votive hands of Jupiter Dolichenus, present the right hand with different attributes. However, the distinction between votive hands of Sabazius and Jupiter Dolichenus isn't only mirrored in the attributes and almost always presented curled snake around the hand's wrist in Sabazius' votive hands, but also that in them, only three fingers are raised, while in Jupiter Dolichenus' votive hands, all five fingers are raised, Hajjar 1978: 455; Johnson 1984: 1595.

765 Not later than the Augustan period, Brandt 2018: 165.

766 Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 183.

767 Boteva 2015: 149-166.

768 Ibid.

769 Dirven 2005: 119-136. The cultic standards are known also from the cults of Jupiter Dolichenus and Serapis, but also from Parthian Hatra and the cults of other eastern gods, like Aglibol and Malakbel, Ibid: 121-124.

770 The standards are presented on triangular votive plates from Comlod in Pannonia Inferior, Jasen and Egeta (Brza Palanka) in Moesia Superior and Mauer-an-der-Url (on this locality, two triangular votive

called manipular or centurial signa, which could have different items on the top of the pole, such as phalerae, heraldic symbols, linen vexillum, a statuette of Victoria or last, but not least, an open wooden or bronze hand.[771] Since we know from two triangular Dolichenus votive plates about cultic standards of the god with an open hand on their top[772] and know that Dolichenus' votive hands (presenting an open hand with all five fingers up) were also a particular kind of cult object, I would suggest, similar to L. Dirven's conclusion (and previously that of M. Speidel),[773] that after annexing Syria to Rome, a certain assimilation between the cultic standards from the Near East and Roman military standards occurred.[774]

Different attributes like animals, plants, objects, musical instruments and human figures are presented on the outer side of Sabazius' votive hands (but also, sometimes, on the palm's surface).[775] A snake entwined around the wrist is also a frequent element, while on the thumb, forefinger and middle finger, a pine cone can be shown. Sabazius' votive hands were important objects in the god's cult and ceremonies in his honour, since they were attached to poles and carried during the processions like a sacred *signa* of the god (which can be seen on the representations of the god holding such a pole, like on the Copenhagen plate).[776] It is interesting that one of the earliest Sabazius monuments is actually a votive hand, found in Dangstetten in Switzerland.[777]

All three ivory needles from the Central Balkan localities of Pontes and Viminacium have damaged fingers, yet it can be clearly seen that they formed the gesture of *benedictio latina.* It is clear that the hands belong to the cult of the god Sabazius and not to Jupiter Dolichenus' cult, because of the snakes entwined around the wrists. Iconographic analogies are numerous and known from many localities in the Roman Empire, however ivory needles with heads in the shape of Sabazius' votive hands found inside the graves (used as grave goods) are attested in Roman necropolises in Emona, Intercisa and Lauriacum.[778] The same context of bone needles has also been discovered in the south-eastern necropolis of Scupi.[779] The Viminacium ivory needle has a pine cone in Sabazius' votive hand. The symbolism of a pine cone in the context of the iconography of the god Sabazius, but also of other Asia Minor deities has already been mentioned, but here I will just repeat that the motif of a pine cone symbolised not only Sabazius' sacred tree, but was also a symbol of fertility and rebirth.[780] Needles with heads in the shape of Sabazius' votive hand contained an apotropaic and soteriological dimension and protected the person who carried them, while the needles of this type with a pine cone or apple symbolised fertility and happiness in love.[781] When used in the cult of the dead, they were used as grave goods, again with the same symbolism of protection and as symbols of life regeneration, which is confirmed in the finds of two Viminacium needles, one of which was found in a cremation grave, while the other needle was found in the sacrificial horizon above the grave.[782]

Next cult monument of the god Sabazius is most interesting and connected to a similar find associated with Magna Mater's cult. It is a silver plate from the Tekija hoard, whose history of interpretation I have already presented in the chapter regarding Magna Mater's monuments in the Central Balkans (cat. 8). To summarise, I will just repeat that different interpretations about the plates' iconography exist – Đ. Mano-Zisi thought that on two silver plates the deities Magna Mater and Sabazius are presented,[783] M. Macrea's opinion is inclined to the representation of Dispater and his paredra Nantusvelta,[784] Ch. Picard and E. N. Lane believed that it is Sabazius who is presented on the Tekija plate,[785] while A. Jovanović offered a completely different interpretation, recognising Hercules on the plate from the Tekija hoard.[786] The iconography on the discussed Tekija plate is additionally complex because of its fragmented state, therefore the range of different interpretations in scholarly literature is not surprising. A figure of a mature, bearded man standing inside an aedicule, whose gable is decorated with a palmette flanked with rosettes, is presented in the centre of the

plates were found), Гавриловић Витас 2019: 198.

[771] Hebblewhite 2003-2004: 77-88.

[772] Triangular votive plate from Mauer-an-der-Url and triangular votive plate from Brza Palanka – Egeta, Гавриловић Витас 2019: 198.

[773] Speidel 1978: 60.

[774] Dirven 2005: 132-133.

[775] The attributes which frequently adorn Sabazius' votive hands are snake, lizard, grasshopper, frog, turtle, eagle, ram's head, bee, krater, pine cone, crescent, caduceus, sacrificial knife, cymbals, flute, a woman with child, Sabazius' bust, Hermes' bust, for more details see *CCIS* I.

[776] A hole at the bottom of many finds of votive hands indicates that they were attached to wooden poles. On a bronze plate from Copenhagen, originally probably found in Rome, Sabazius is presented holding in his left hand a sceptre with a hand on its top, *CCIS* II: num. 80.

[777] A votive hand of Sabazius from Dangstetten was found in the Roman supply camp, dated from 15 to 9 BC. The hand is without any attributes, beside a snake curled around hand's wrist, with her head placed on the hand's thumb, *CCIS* I: 21, num. 49; *CCIS* III: 9.

[778] Petković 1995: 33.

[779] Jovanova 2015: 302.

[780] *CCIS* III: 30.

[781] Petković 1995: 33.

[782] Ibid. Зотовић, Јордовић, 1990: T. CLXXXV, 7, 23, fig. 12;

[783] Mano-Zisi Đ. 1957: 33-39, num. 34-35, T. XXIII, XXIV.

[784] Macrea 1959: 14, fig. 50.

[785] As his arguments for the hypothesis that on Tekija plate god Sabazius is presented, E. N. Lane states that in god's cult, type of votive plates as Tekija's plates have been confirmed, with vegetable ornaments and the attribute of the caduceus. Also, the remark of other authors that on Tekija's plate Sabazius isn't presented because it seems that he doesn't have a Phrygian hat, isn't accepted by E. N. Lane, who reminds that Sabazius' presentations don't always imply that god wears a hat and that on Tekija's plate, god is either presented without a hat or the hat isn't skillfully presented (because god's head is almost connected to the aedicula's top), Lane 1980: 24-25.

[786] Јовановић 1990: 29-35.

silver plate. The god is shown, perhaps, with a diadem in his hair, dressed in a chlamys under which is a belted chiton. In his right hand he holds the handle of an unknown object (Đ. Mano-Zisi and E. N. Lane think it could be a patera).[787] There is an image of labrys in the apex of the aedicula, while to the left of the god, at the level of his arm, a caduceus with two entwined snakes with raised heads, is shown. On the caduceus' top, two leaves with an insect are presented (Đ. Mano-Zisi thinks that the insect is a bee). Remembering similar presentations of Sabazius, we know that he was frequently presented inside an *aedicula,* with the motif of a caduceus.[788] The attribute of a labrys is known from a bronze plate in Ampurias, on which, unlike in the Tekija plate, the axe is held by a lumberjack, shown behind Sabazius.[789] Đ. Mano-Zisi connects the attribute of the labrys with the cult of Magna Mater and the ritus of *taurobolium*, while E. N. Lane considers different interpretations of the object – the labrys could represent the divine power, but also a symbol of opposition to the god and the threat to cut down his sacred pine tree.[790] A. Jovanović interprets the labrys as Hercules' attribute, who is, in his opinion, in the Tekija plate, syncretised with Jupiter Heliopolitanus.[791] A. Garcia y Bellido believes that the motif of the labrys, as a typical Asia Minor motif, connects Sabazius with Jupiter Soter.[792] The caduceus can represent an attribute of several deities, but the winged caduceus is an attribute *par excellence* of the god Hermes/Mercury. The hypothesis that on the Tekija plate the caduceus is a symbol of the god Hermes/ Mercury would not be ungrounded, bearing in mind many Sabazius monuments with either an image of Hermes/Mercury or his symbol, the caduceus.[793] E. N. Lane thinks that on Sabazius' monuments, Hermes/ Mercury had the role of a guide for dead souls, a *psychopompos,* or just a guide.[794] Although M. Macrea suggests that Dis Pater is represented on Tekija's plaque, he points out the similarities between the Tekija plaque's iconography and the imagery presented on a bronze plaque from Tibiscum, where a snake, thunderbolt and an eagle, in his opinion, imply Zeus-Sabazius' syncretistic representation.[795]The insect on the caduceus' top is, in Đ. Mano-Zisi opinion, a bee and he connects it to the cult of the goddesses Demeter and Ephesian Artemis, but also emphasises the symbolism of a bee and its role in the mythology of Dionysus, Apollo and, primarily, Zeus.[796] Ch. Picard reflects on the bee's significance in the cult of Anatolian Kubaba, while A. Jovanović concludes that the bee on the Tekija plate could symbolise the goddess Venus Heliopolitanus – Atargatis.[797] Our opinion would be that on the Tekija plate, the god Sabazius is almost certainly presented and I find the argument to be in close iconographical analogy with a bronze plate from Copenhagen.[798] Not only that many iconographical elements are very similar, but also the presence of certain motifs like a snake, a bee and a caduceus, strongly imply typical Sabazius imagery present in both cult objects.

Also, thus far known diptychs with representations of Magna Mater and Sabazius, like a bronze diptych from Berlin, can be helpful in the iconographic interpretation of the Tekija plates with presumed images of Magna Mater and Sabazius.[799] The undoubted close relationship between the two cults also points to that hypothesis – as Magna Mater was the supreme female deity in Asia Minor, Sabazius was the supreme male deity. Both cults were of mystery-orgiastic character and their celebrations were distinctive because of the particular trance state, the loud music of the tympanum and cymbals and the ecstatic dancing and shouting. The ritus of initiation in both cults comprised the utterance of a precise formula (*symbola*) and characteristic gestures, which symbolically presented the 'death' of

[787] Mano-Zisi 1957: 36; Lane 1980: 25.

[788] Sabazius' presentations with god standing or sitting inside the aedicula, are known from the monuments found in Vichy, Rome, Zadar (Jader), *CCIS* II: 35, num. 74, 38, num. 80, 41, num. 87.

[789] Bronze votive plaques with Sabazius' presentations from Ampurias were found in the necropolis of locality Ampurias, inside a child's grave, placed beside the urn. On them, quite a complex scene is presented with a mature bearded man, dressed in Oriental clothes, with a raised right hand in the gesture of *benedictio latina* with sun rays around the hand and his left hand holding a sceptre. A ram's head is presented under man's right foot, while on his left side a tree with entwined snake, grapes and Dionysus' bust is shown. On his other side, there is a pine tree with a snake curled around it and a figure of a lumberjack with an axe behind it. Under each tree is a niche and in the left niche, a woman is presented offering on the altar, with a lizard and two turtles. In the right niche, a woman holds a baby, accompanied by a bird and a reptile. Beside the moon and a star, other motifs are presented like a dagger, winged caduceus, flaming altar and two Sabazius' votive hands on a crater. On other plaque, only a standing figure of Dioscurus with a horse is shown, with a star above Dioscurus' head. Most probably there was a third plaque, with the same iconography as in the second plate (Dioscurus with a horse), flanking symmetrically the central plaque with the god's presentation in the centre. E. N. Lane presumes that some mythical scene from Sabazius' cult is presented, while A. Garcia y Bellido underlines its' eschatological character, *CCIS* II: 40-41, num. 85; Lane 1980: 19-20; Garcia y Bellido 1967: 73-81.

[790] Mano-Zisi: 1957, 38; E. N. Lane numbers stelae from Asia Minor with confession inscriptions, with the inscription on one of them of certain Stratoneikos who admits that out of his ignorance, he cut a sacred tree of god. The punishment for such a crime was to make a vow to a god and thank him. That is the reason why E. N. Lane thinks that the figure of a lumberjack from Ampurias plaque present a person ready to cut Sabazius' sacred tree, *CCIS* III: 28.

[791] Јовановић 1990: 31-32.

[792] Johnson 1984: 1593.

[793] E. N. Lane constates that after Zeus/Jupiter, god Hermes/Mercury is the deity with whom Sabazius most frequently appears. Hermes/ Mercury heads or busts are known on 12 votive hands of the god, while his caduceus (sometimes winged) is shown on 16 votive hands of Sabazius, *CCIS* III: 13.

[794] For example on a votive stele from Asia Minor' locality, where Hermes is presented as Sabazius' guide, Ibid.

[795] Macrea 1959: 336-338, num. 4.

[796] Mano-Zisi 1957: 37.

[797] Picard 1961:161; Јовановић 1990: 31-32.

[798] *CCIS* II: 38-39, n. 80.

[799] E. N. Lane names the monuments on which Sabazius is presented with Magna Mater or with one of her hypostasis, Meter Hipta (known in association with the god from three Lydian inscriptions, *CCIS* II: num. 36-37, 40), *CCIS* III: 16-19.

Sabazius plate from Copenhagen
(http://www.sabazius.com/uploads/7/4/8/8/7488884/6387827_orig.png)

the initiate in this world and his or her 'rebirth' in the new life of the cult he or she had chosen. Epigraphic and archaeological monuments attest close connections between the two cults, both showing Sabazius with the god Attis.[800] Both Tekija plates were probably worn either attached to the priest's or devotee's clothes or could have been attached on a diadem (or a bracelet) of the god's priest.[801]Like the plate with Magna Mater's presentation, the plate with the presumed god Sabazius from the Tekija hoard is dated to the second half of the 1st century.

A gold ring with a gem, on which a representation of a bearded god is shown, was found in the locality of Vinik, in the vicinity of Niš and is also included among Sabazius' monuments (cat. 9). A standing figure of a mature, bearded man shown in profile, dressed in a chiton with a helmet on his head and turned to a column with an entwined snake, is presented on the gem. In his right hand he holds a staff and in his left hand an oval object (A. Jovanović suggests that it is a pine cone), which he is offering to the snake. On the top of the column is an eagle. This iconographic composition strongly reminds of the Vidin bronze statuette, where a similar iconography is seen – a pine cone, an eagle and a snake curled around the tree. I am not aware of similar iconographic presentations as the one from the Vinik ring, but I would like to point out several iconographies that are, to a certain degree, analogous. On the above mentioned plate in Copenhagen, Sabazius is presented with a pine cone in his hand and a tree with an entwined snake behind him and an eagle.[802] The Sabazius bust in the Vatican Museum also shows a deity holding a pine cone, a snake curled around a branch and an eagle on the god's right shoulder.[803] A similar image of Sabazius with an oval object in his hand (presumably a pine cone) is known from a mould for metal plaques from Jader, but also from a rectangular marble plaque from Tomis (Fintinele, near Constanta) in Moesia Inferior.[804] However, as A. Jovanović notes, what complicates the interpretation of the iconography presented in the Vinik ring is the obvious syncretism of different iconographies. The syncretism with Zeus/Jupiter is clear from the image of an eagle, the god's characteristic symbol. The image of a snake can also be a typical element of Jupiter's cult image, because the eagle and snake present two principles – solar, that is celestial, and chthonian, that is a principle typical for the Underworld.[805] The attribute of a helmet on Sabazius' head is most unusual and could be connected to the god Hermes/Mercury, but also to the god Mars. The association of Sabazius and Hermes/Mercury is confirmed as the god's connection to Zeus/Jupiter in epigraphic and archaeological monuments.[806] In that context, for Sabazius' presentation from the Vinik ring, it is interesting to mention a scene depicting Mercury on a silver vessel found in Berthouville in Gallia, on which the god is shown in front of a column on which a rooster stands. Around the column is a wavy line (perhaps a reminiscence of a snake?) and a Capricorn shown beside the column.[807] Another monument is also quite interesting – it is a stele from the locality of Kertch, on which a mature, bearded man is presented, seated on a throne, with an oval object in his left hand. On his left side is Hermes with a winged caduceus, while on his right side a snake and a woman turned

[800] Like on the needle with a head in the shape of Sabazius' hand, with Attis' bust, Medini 1981: 476.
[801] Picard 1961: 174.
[802] *CCIS* II: 38-39, num. 80.
[803] Ibid: num. 84.
[804] Suić 1965: 91-128; Medini 1982: 457 and further; Rectangular marble plaque from ancient Tomis was found during the agricultural works and its iconography resemblance much the scenes known from Copenhagen, Berlin and Ampurias plaques. Sabazius is presented standing, holding a staff with ram's head. Attributes like a tree, a snake, a pedum and a lighted altar are presented, as the scene of a man plowing with a yoke of lions, *CCIS* II: 37, num. 78.
[805] Јовановић 1990: 89. A snake has a chthonian aspect as the lizard and the frog, *CCIS* III: 23
[806] Epigraphic monuments of Sabazius and Mercury are known from two monuments from the vicinity of Trnovo (dedicated to Jupiter Sabadius and Mercury) and Rome, Јовановић 1990: 89; *CCIS* II: 29, num. 59. Association of Sabazius and Jupiter is known from already mentioned monument from Henchir el-Faouar, dedicated to Jupiter Zabazius, as from votive monument from Mainz dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Sabasius, Johnson 1984: 1590; *CCIS* II: 36, num. 75.
[807] Јовановић 1990: 90.

towards the god are presented. M. M. Kobylina thinks that the woman represents the goddess Magna Mater, while V. Skorpil suggests that the winged caduceus and snake imply the chthonian character of Sabazius, which is, in his opinion, additionally proved with epigraphic monuments dedicated to Magna Mater and also with one goddess' statuette.[808] On the other hand, reconsidering the possibility of a helmet on Sabazius' head as a symbol of the god Mars, the association of the two gods is attested on an epigraphic monument from Praeneste,[809] and, perhaps, also on a relief from the Asia Minor locality of Kula.[810] The staff in Sabazius' hand on the Vinik ring can be interpreted as a *pedum*, a typical attribute of the god Attis too.[811] The association of Sabazius and Attis is implied with the presentations of Sabazius and Magna Mater from two Berlin plaques, but also in a motif of a Phrygian head (identical to Attis' masks) from a votive bronze plaque found in Macedonia or Epirus.[812] Eclecticism of this kind and elements from other deities' iconographies could be explained with their mutual soteriological and eschatological aspects. This hypothesis might, perhaps, be additionally supported by the fact that the Vinik ring was found inside a grave, as a grave good. Bearing this fact in mind, it seems that the presumed apotropaic, soteriological and eschatological function of the ring could be argued, because the object secured the protection and hope of resurrection and eternal life for the deceased. Also, the syncretism of different cults is characteristic for the 3rd and 4th century, to which period the Vinik ring is dated.

The last three statuary monuments are of somewhat disputable identification because of their fragmented state. A fragmented statuette found in the locality of Kostolac, Viminacium presents a part of a tree with a snake curled around it (cat. 10). The first author who the published fragmented Viminacium statuette, N. Vulić, was also the first to describe the monument in outline, and not ascribe it to a particular deity or mythological scene. Since the motif of a tree with a snake wrapped around it almost always represents a component part of Sabazius' iconography, my first thought was that the fragmented statuette could represent one of the statuary monuments of the god. However, aware of the fact that there are insufficient arguments to claim with any certainty that the Viminacium statuette belongs to the corpus of Sabazius' monuments, the previously offered hypothesis can be only supported by other Sabazius monuments also discovered in Viminacium, such as a marble plate bearing his name and two needles with heads in the shape of Sabazius' hands.

In the locality of Ravna, Timacum Minus, where Dionysus' cult was heavily favoured by the inhabitants, the cult of Sabazius is already attested with an epigraphic monument dedicated to Sabazius Paternus Augustus. Another monument was, however, discovered, alas in a fragmentary state, which could be related with the god's cult (cat. 11). The marble base of a statuette with a visible pair of human feet was in the locality, with a turtle on one side of the figure and a column on the other. The motif of a turtle is rarely seen on Central Balkan statuary monuments, therefore, the hypothesis that the Ravna fragmented statuette could represent Sabazius with one of his frequent animal companions, a turtle, could be a possibility.[813] The turtle is, after the snake, one of the four most frequent of Sabazius' animal companions.[814] It had a dual symbolism - in the Greek period' the turtle was a symbol of fertility, but also possessed a chthonian aspect.[815] Figures of turtles are present on almost every known find of Sabazius' votive hands, while on other cult monuments of the god, the turtle does not appear so frequently.[816] The argument for assuming that the fragmented Ravna statuette could present a Sabazius monument would be similar as the case of the previous monument – the god's cult has already been attested in Ravna with an epigraphic monument.

The last monument I think should be mentioned, although it does not represent the god Sabazius, but elements from the god's iconography, is a marble sculpture, discovered in a *thermae* at Mediana, near Niš, of a drunken Dionysus with a satyr.[817] The fragmented

[808] Kobylina 1976: 11

[809] The votive monument dedicated to Deus Magnus Silvanus Mars Hercules Iupiter Sabazius, could perhaps imply to Sabazius' dimension as a military god, *CCIS* III: 16.

[810] A. Jovanović thinks that one of the figures from monument from Asia Minor' locality Kula (Coloe) presents god Mars (because of a helmet on his head), but E. N. Lane thinks that on the head of a man from Kula, a helmet is not presented, but a crescent, Јовановић 1990: 88; *CCIS* II: 18

[811] Јовановић 1990: 90.

[812] Two bronze plates, probably discovered in Rome and now in Berin, present diptych (?). On one plate, enthroned Cybele is presented, flanked by Hermes on the left side and Attis on the right side. The goddess wears a mural crown, a poppy and a lion on her lap. Hermes is recognizable by the petasus, caduceus and a bag, while Attis holds a flower. Attributes of cymbals and crossed flutes are shown as two figures behind Cybele holding a wreath over her head. On the other plate, standing Sabazius is shown, holding a pine cone and a sceptre, surrounded by the motives of an eagle, cymbals, a star, grapes, rosette, caduceus, whip, scales, flutes, cornucopia, lighted altar, snake, lizard, turtle etc., *CCCA* III: 82, num. 304; *CCIS* II: 39, num. 81.

[813] Душанић 1975: 136, ft. 33.

[814] E. N. Lane writes that after the snake, the four most frequent animals presented with Sabazius are: a ram, a frog, a lizard and a turtle, *CCIS* III: 23.

[815] Pausanias writes about numerous figurines in the shape of a turtle in Hermes' temples in Greece, Pausanias, *Description of Greece,* VIII. 30.6. A turtle was considered a symbol of fertility, which is known by the finds of turtle figurines (terracotta, marble, ivory etc.) in the temples of Athena and Artemis. The animal was the usual companion of god Hermes, that is Mercury (particularly in Gallia), but it accompanied other deities also like Aphrodite/Venus, Pan etc. Bevan 1988: 1-6; Toynbee 19: 221-222.

[816] While the figurine of turtle appears with other Sabazius' attributes on the outer side of god's votive hands, on other kinds of deity's monuments it appears sporadically, like for example on one of two bronze plates from Berlin, *CCIS* II, 39, num. 81.

[817] A fragmentary statuary composition of drunken Dionysus with satyr was found in the area of thermae in 1932. year (today in the

The sculptural composition of a drunken Dionysus with a satyr from Mediana, Niš
(photo-documentation: Institute of Archaeology Belgrade)

sculpture comprises a marble base of rectangular shape with two pairs of human feet of different dimensions, part of a tree, a rock, an animal's paws and a ram's head. The dimensions of the fragmented base with the remains of the sculptural composition imply that it was a scene of monumental size, modelled by a very skilful and experienced artisan. The position of the two pairs of human feet, one pair of a smaller size and one pair of a larger size, suggest that one person was standing behind the other, supporting him or her.[818] Beside the feet of the person who is supporting the other person, the rear paws of a four-legged animal, probably a panther, are represented and, judging by the position of the paws, the animal was lying. One foot of the person who supports the other person is placed on a ram's head, which is carved with the upmost care and very realistically. It is clear that the sculptural composition from the *thermae* at Mediana represents a scene from the myth of Dionysus, in which the god, being drunk, is supported by one of his followers - a satyr, Silenus, a maenead or, less often, Ariadne. Judging by the remains of the scene, it is obvious that Dionysus was supported by a satyr, who stands directly behind the god.[819] What makes the composition somewhat unusual is the detail of the left foot on a ram's head. Although the ram does not belong to the circle of animals that accompany the god Dionysus,[820] in several representations of the deity, the whole ram's figure is shown[821] or, as is the case of Mediana sculptural composition, only the animal's head is presented[822]. However, in not a single representation of Dionysus known to us, does the god or his companion place their foot on a ram's head.[823] Unknown in Dionysus iconography, this iconographical detail is very well known in the representations of the god Sabazius; I will just mention the statuette of the god from Augustopolis, bronze plates from Copenhagen and Ampurias as well as the mould for plates from Jader, where the god is shown with one leg forward, with his foot placed on the ram's head.[824] Without going deeper into the possible reasons for the obvious influence of Sabazius' iconography on the sculptural composition from Mediana, it can be presumed that the reason for the presence of an iconographical element from Sabazius' iconography in Dionysus' sculpture can be found in the strong Thracian cultural and artistic influences that were present in eastern parts of the Central Balkans, in the area of Niš. The iconographical syncretism between the two gods has not been attested in the Central Balkans in the same way that it has been presumed in other localities, such as in the temple of Dionysus in Cosa.[825] Another assumption would point

ancient collection of the National Museum in Niš, inv. num. 10047), beside four fragmented marble sculptures and a small marble lion. The statuary composition was shortly described but without the analysis of its iconography and definite interpretation by Јовановић 1975: 61; Tomović 1993: 109, num. 148, fig. 49.5; Пилиповић 2011: 43-44.

[818] For a detailed description see Gavrilović Vitas 2017: 193-203.

[819] Like in the presentation from bronze hydria found in Eretria (now in the National Museum in Athens, inv. num. 7913), from the 4th century BC, Gasparri 1986: num. 268.

[820] Animals included in the common entourage of the god Dionysus are the panther, leopard, donkey, ram, snake and lizard, not so frequently the lion and tiger (in mosaics from El-Djem or museums in Sousse, the lion and tiger are depicted next to Dionysus instead of the panther). Although it was seldom shown in the iconography of Bacchus/Dionysus, the ram is frequently shown as a chthonic symbol in representations of the old Dionysus or as a sacrificial animal in the scenes of initiation into the cult, Turcan 1966: 495-496, 551-552, 583-384.

[821] In the representation on the sarcophagus from the Museum in Ostia (inv. num. 10316), the god is sitting on the rock and offering fruit to the ram or in the representation from the sarcophagus from the Glyptothek in Munich (inv. num. 240), where Dionysus is draped in a panther's skin, riding the ram who is led by a satyr and two women. The sarcophagus from Ostia dates to the last quarter of the 3rd century, Turcan 1966: 64, 327, pls. 52, 168, 408, pl. 8b; Huskinson 1996: 32, num. 3.4 and 33, num. 3.14.

[822] On the famous Chiaramonti sarcophagus, next to Dionysus there is a ram that will be sacrificed, while on the marble relief from the Vatican (inv. num. 1024), a young Bacchus leant on the Satyr is presented, with Heracles holding cornucopia, by whose right leg a ram's head on the ground is shown, Turcan 1966: 525; Gasparri 1986: num. 106.

[823] There are rare representations in which Dionysus is shown with his feet on the panther's back. Such is the case with the representation of Dionysus with Ariadne on a pyxis from Egypt made of ivory, dated to the 6th century or the representation on the sarcophagus found at the archaeological site in Acquatraversa, now in the National Museum in Rome (inv. num. 123711), Augé, Linant de Bellefonds 1986: num. 121, Gasparri 1986: num. 94.

[824] A statuette of the god Sabazios, found at the archaeological site Augustapolis, Cavdarli, shows the god with his right foot on the ram's head. On a bronze plate in Copenhagen (found in Rome) Sabazios is shown within an aedicula (with the heads of Selena and Helios in the upper corners of the aedicule, along with many other attributes characteristic of the cult), placing his right foot on the ram's head. On a bronze plate from Ampurias in Spain, Sabazios' right foot is placed on the ram's head. A mould from Jader with a reverse representation shows Sabazios in an aedicula with his right leg forward and placed on the ram's head, *CCIS* II: 37, num. 77, 38, num. 80, 40-41, num. 85a-b, 41-42, n. 87; Medini 1981: 457.

[825] Possible cult syncretism between Dionysus and Sabazius is known from the example of the Temple of Liber Pater from the 2nd century, discovered at the archaeological site Cosa. Beside the coins that

The Bacchic group from London Mithraeum (http://www.tertullian.org/rpearse/mithras/display.php?page=cimrm822)

to the sculptor's apparent ignorance of Dionysus' iconography, which allowed a certain contamination with elements from Sabazius' iconography. This assumption is additionally supported by the fact that on Mediana's sculptural composition of the drunken Dionysus with a satyr, the god is not the one who places his foot on a ram's head, as is the case in known Sabazius representations, but the foot instead belongs to the satyr. The closest iconographic analogies can be found in the sculpture of the Ludovisi Dionysus, the Dionysus with Satyr from Parma and the statue group of Bacchus with an entourage, from the Mithraeum in London.[826]

The sculptural composition of a drunken Dionysus with satyr from Mediana can be dated from the 2nd century to the year 340.

3.3. The Cult of Sabazius in the Central Balkans

As can be seen from the corpus of Sabazius monuments discovered in Roman Central Balkans' provinces, the cult of the god enjoyed much popularity among the residents. However, the ubication of the localities where the monuments were found suggests that most of them were discovered in the northern and eastern parts of the territory, in military camps (Timacum Minus, Pontes) or larger urban centres (Viminacium, Naissus). This localisation of Sabazius monuments would coincide with the origin and professions of one part of his dedicants who were of Thracian, Greece or Oriental origin and mostly soldiers stationed in the localities where the monuments were discovered. The analysis of archaeological monuments of Sabazius allows us to constate that his canonical image was presented in Central Balkan localities without any syncretism with some other deity (excluding the sculptural composition from Mediana). Under which aspects was Sabazius venerated in the Central Balkans territory? Two epithets, Paternus and Augustus, clearly imply that for the dedicant Flavius Clemens, the god was a deity of his homeland, but also the protector of the Roman emperor for whose health and well-being Flavius erected the monument. On another votive monument from the vicinity of Pirot, Sabazius is respected as *Κυρίως*, as a god who had the power to rule over the destinies of his adherents. Perhaps the dedication from the vicinity of Pirot was offered to Sabazius in his capacity of a supreme god, which Sabazius certainly was for some of his worshippers. Although a particular kind of Sabazius cult object, votive hands of the god, has not been confirmed in any Central Balkan locality, three finds of needles with heads in the shape of Sabazius' votive hands allude to this kind of monument. On two needles from Viminacium the hands have a snake around their wrists, which defines the objects as belonging to the cult of Sabazius and not Jupiter Dolichenus. Since both needles were found in a funerary context, their apotropaic and soteriological dimension can be presumed. However, the motif of a pine cone on one of the needles' head, also suggests the eschatological dimension of the object, which would mean that the finds of needles with heads in the shape of Sabazius' votive hands also symbolised hope and belief in rebirth and eternal life. The complex iconography of the silver

indicated how long the temple lasted (even until the 5th century), statues of other deities were found (Hercules, Venus, Minerva), as well as the fragments of vessels with applied snakes. It is these vessels with a snake motif (the animal *par excellence* for the god Sabazios) that served some authors with the argument that a syncretistic cult of Dionysus-Sabazios existed in the temple in Cosa, Collins Clinton 1977: 38-45.

[826] For the sculpture of Dionysus with a satyr from Parma (now in the Glyptothek in Munich), Pochmarski 1990: 1. P. 46; For Ludovisi Dionysus, Gavrilović Vitas 2017: 197. The statue group composition at the Walbrook Mithraeum (now in the Museum of London, inv. num. 18496) was found during archaeological research of the Roman core in central London in 1954, within the Mithraeum with a rectangular shape (dim. 18 x 8 m), dated to 240. Together with the statuette, several fragmented sculptures of different deities were also found (Serapis, Minerva, Mercury, Bacchus/Dionysus). With the excavations that ensued, it was discovered that the Mithraeum was in use for about 100 years (until 350), when its inner space underwent a broader reconstruction. Taking into account the temple's architecture, the findings of this statue group of Dionysus with Silenus, a satyr and a maenad, two fragmented torsos of the god Dionysus, and particularly bearing in mind the inscription on the base of the statue composition of Dionysus from the Mithraeum, the majority of authors believe that the construction interventions from 350 were executed to modify the Mithraeum to transform it into a temple of the god Liber/ Dionysus, Harris, Harris 1965: 6-17; Toynbee J. M. C. 1986: 41, 62; Henig 1998: 230-232; Brigham 1998: 237-238; Coombe, Grew, Hayward, Henig 2015: 1, num. 1, pls. 1, 13.

plate from the Tekija hoard resembles the iconography of all other plates with the image of Sabazius known from different parts of the Roman Empire. *Signa* of this kind were used as votive icons, as cult objects that could have been worn on the chest of the priests, like the votive plate with Sabazius' image in Copenhagen, while they performed rituals in the god's honour. The plates represented an important part of the god's cult inventory, presenting visual agents of communication between the god's priests and devotees, since they could have been worn either as pectorals or on the diadems of priests.[827] They could also have been worn on a chain around a priest's neck or perhaps by the initiated, thus symbolising their belonging to the god and their unification with him. Did the silver plate from the Tekija hoard represent a cult object used in ritual practices? The answer to this question must be sought in the wider context of the Tekija hoard discovery and the other four votive plates found together with the plates with images of Magna Mater and Sabazius. The first author who published the Tekija hoard objects, Đ. Mano-Zisi, thinks that they represented objects of Hellenistic-Oriental content.[828] The other four silver plates contain images of deities like Zeus, Mercury, Fortuna and Selena and it seems that the assumption of Đ. Mano-Zisi, that the plates were the treasury of a sanctuary removed because of some impending danger and buried as a hoard or, perhaps, confiscated by a soldier and then hidden, is possible.[829] Whatever was the destiny of the Tekija hoard's silver plates, in my opinion they were part of the *sacrarium* of the temple of an unknown deity or deities (perhaps the god Zeus?) and were used as cult objects during ritual practices. The silver plate with an image of the god Sabazius, in the context of the aspects under which he was venerated, contained soteriological and eschatological symbolism similar to the gold ring with a gem from the Vinik grave near Niš, from the first half of the 4th century.[830] The owner of the gold ring, who was probably also the owner of the luxurious villa discovered nearby, was a person of considerable wealth and probably educated, therefore, possibly more deeply acquainted with the theology of Sabazius' cult.Who were the dedicants of Sabazius cult in the Central Balkans? Beside soldiers, whose veneration of the god is attested with a plate from the Tekija hoard and epigraphic monuments from Ravna and Pirot, and individuals belonging to the upper class, such as the owner of the gold ring from the tomb in Vinik, Niš, among Sabazius devotees there were probably merchants, craftsmen, freedmen, slaves, but also women, which is implied with the finds of two needles from Pontes and Viminacium, discovered in women's graves.[831] The presence of women in Sabazius' cult can be ascribed only to the Roman period, in E. N. Lane's opinion, because epigraphic and archaeological monuments of the god imply that the dedicants and worshippers were exclusively men.[832] However, even during the Roman period, only three women have been confirmed as Sabazius' dedicants and it appears as though men constituted the majority of the god's worshippers until the end of Antiquity. Nevertheless, it is clear that a soteriological promise contained in the cult's theology attracted his devotees, regardless of their sex and made them believe in the salvation that would secure their joyous Afterlife. No remains of the god's sanctuary have been confirmed in the Central Balkans territory and we cannot presume in which way ritual practices in his honour were performed. However, perhaps the existence of two Sabazius monuments in Timacum Minus would imply the existence of a temple or *sacrarium* of the god, separately or together with deities like Mithras, Diana, Mars and the Thracian Rider, whose cults have been attested in the locality as well.[833] In Late Antiquity, the Bacchic character that Sabazius shared with Dionysus evoked the anger of Christians and Christian writers, who stated that Nola ritual orgies were performed 'where Venus got on too well with the god of wine'. Firmicus Maternus even accuses Dionysus of leading women astray with his spells.[834] Analogous to other Asia Minor cults from the Roman Central Balkans, Sabazius' cult is not known from the second half of the 4th century.[835]

[827] Mano-Zisi 1957: 43.
[828] Ibid: 54 and further.
[829] Ibid: 58.
[830] A. Jovanović writes that on the locality 'Ribnik'in Vinik, a luxury late antique villa was discovered, decorated with mosaics, marble architectural plastic and numerous coins. Due to the numismatic finds, the proposed dating of the building is the first half of the 4th century, Јовановић 1977: 88.
[831] Зотовић, Јордовић 1990: 105, G1 – 246.
[832] Only on three monuments dedicated to Sabazius, women are his worshippers: the dedicant of Rome marble statuette of a seated goddess (Fortuna or Abundantia) is Attia Celerina, on a stone tablet from Rome dedicant is certain Servilia and on a bronze boar on a base-plate of unknown provenience dedicant is also a woman of a Greek or Oriental origin, *CCIS* II 29, num. 58, 31, num. 63, 36, num. 76.
[833] The practice of Sabazius sharing a temple with other deities is known from presumed temples of Thracian Rider and Sabazius in Thrace and from the temple in Ostia of Sabazius and goddess Caelestis (later on used as Mithraeum), Turcan 1996: 317-318.
[834] Turcan 1996: 326-327.
[835] The latest monument with the image of god Sabazius from Central Balkans is the golden ring with a syncretistic presentation on the ring's gem, dated to the first half of the 4th century.

4. Jupiter Dolichenus

4.1. The Cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in Roman Culture

A local god from Commagene, Baal Dolichenus was, in the period from the 2nd to the 4th century, one of the most favoured deities in the Roman Central Balkans provinces venerated, as the god Mithras, on numerous localities on the Danube Limes, but also in the interior of the provinces in question. Originating from the Mount Dülük Baba Tepesi, near Doliche, this local supreme god of the city was, after contact with Roman culture in the 1st century BC, identified with the supreme Roman god Jupiter and became Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus.[836] Although in the older literature, certain authors thought that the original region of the god should be sought in the wider territory of Anatolia, F. Cumont, P. Merlat and M. P. Speidel suggested that the locality of Doliche was the very place from which the cult originated.[837] During archaeological excavations in 2003, a temple of the god was confirmed on Mount Dülük Baba Tepesi, indicating a continuity of the god's cult since the early Iron Age and through the Roman imperial period, not only in the context of cult rites, but also in the context of the iconography of the god. Upon contact with Roman culture, the iconography of the god from Doliche slightly adapted to the conqueror's taste and the deity was presented in a military fashion, dressed in a cuirass.[838] Through careful analysis of the iconography and aspects of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult, most authors agree that certain prototypes of the god can be seen in the Summerian god Ishkur, the Accadian deity Adad, the Hurrian/Hittite god Teshub, the Semitic Ba´al Shamin or the Aramean Hadad (particularly, Teshub, Hadad and Baal shared similar iconography and mythology).[839] However, the iconography of the Dolichenian Baal was quite similar to the later Roman appearance in the context of the attributes the deity was presented with – a bull, a double headed axe (*bipennis*) and a thunderbolt. The Semitic Baal transformed due to the equation with the Roman supreme deity into Jupiter Dolichenus, so certain elements in his iconography changed, like the clothes that were Roman military dress (leather kilt, cloak, sword, greaves and a cuirass). As early as from the beginning of the 20th century, different authors have suggested that Commagenian cohorts were accountable for introducing the god's cult to the Roman army, referring to the fact that after 18, when Rome conquered Commagene, auxiliary units of Commagenian soldiers were incorporated into the Roman army and started to spread the cult of the god.[840]Also, the town of Doliche was in such a suitable geographical position at the cross-road of several important roads leading from Asia Minor to northern Syria, and many soldiers and merchants who passed through would have been able to become acquainted with the god's cult.[841] Although in earlier literature, the role of the soldiers as the main carriers in spreading the god's cult was emphasised, contemporary writers do not deny the important role of traders, freedmen and slaves as well.[842] Ancient writers are almost silent in the context of Jupiter Dolichenus' theology and ritual practices and only isolated cases are known, like Stephanus of Byzantium who writes in his *Ethnica* that the place from where the god originated was Doliche, while the first mention of the city of Doliche dates from the 2nd century, when it is mentioned by Claudius Ptolemaeus, in his *Geography*.[843] The earliest

[836] The original sanctuary of god was on a hill Dülük Baba Tepesi, where archaeological excavations led from 2001. year have confirmed cult's continuity since the period of late Iron Age. The iconographic continuity is stated as well, although in touch with Rome, the iconography of the god becomes canonized and he is presented in a standard Roman military outfit (except the Phrygian hat on his head), for more details see Blömer and Winter 2005: 81; Blömer 2011: 79-85; Blömer 2017: 96-112.

[837] Authors like A. Popa and I. Berciu for example, thought that due to the formulae *ubi ferum nascitur* or *ubi reffum exoritur* ('where iron is born') constated on some monuments dedicated to the god, Jupiter Dolichenus' original place of worship was to be identified with some of the Anatolian localities, Popa, Berciu 1978: 46. However, the first scholar who thought in 1890. year that a temple to Jupiter Dolichenus was situated in Dülük Baba Tepesi mountain was O. Puchstein, with F. Cumont following his opinion in the early 20th century, Hörig 1984: 2138; Merlat 1951; Merlat 1960; Speidel 1978: 1-3.

[838] Blömer 2015, 129-143.

[839] Merlat 1960: 57; the prototypes of later Jupiter Dolichenus were local weather gods, who were believed to control the nature, rivers, was associated with rain, storms etc.

[840] Schwertheim 1991: 35.

[841] Turcan 1996: 159.

[842] Authors like A. fon Domaszewski, F. Cumont, A. H. Kan and Lj. Zotović saw Jupiter Dolichenus as primarily god of a military character, in which cult soldiers were the main carriers and worshippers, Speidel 1978: 38. F. Cumont and P. Merlat thought that Jupiter Dolichenus became a kind of 'official' deity of the army because of his popularity among the soldiers, Cumont 1903: 178; Merlat 1960: However, M. P. Speidel wonders whether the god was really primarily the god of soldiers and army, because less than 40 % of the dedications to the god, mentions military persons, Speidel 1978: 39. In their study from 1987. year, M. Hörig and E. Schwertheim gathered all so-far known monuments of Jupiter Dolichenus, stating that in around half of the total 650 monuments (approx.), dedications are made by soldiers, officers, veterans or military units, *CCID*. A. Collar however, re-examining all so-far known hypothesis in the scholarly literature about the significance of the military in the spreading of Jupiter Dolichenus cult, concludes that although the role of civilians and priests was important too, the soldiers and military personnel were most accountable for the spreading of god's cult, Collar 2013: 137-143.

[843] Sanders 1902: 85-86; Claudius Ptolemaios, *Geography* V 15. 10.

representations of Jupiter Dolichenus began to appear from the 1st century in Asia Minor localities where the god is presented standing on a bull, with a tiara on his head, holding a double headed axe and a thunderbolt in his hands.[844] The earliest testimony of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult in relation to the Roman emperor was found in Doliche, in the form of an official seal, on which the god is clasping hands with the Roman emperor, probably dating to the period from Pompeius to Augustus.[845] The earliest inscription erected to the god in the western provinces was supposedly from Rome, dated to 92 and dedicated by a *praefectus vigilum*.[846] From Hadrian's reign, two monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus are known – a monument from Lambaesis, dated to 125, and a monument from Carnuntum, dated to the period of Hadrian,[847] which is dedicated by younger members of Dolichenus' cult, for the health of the emperor and to commemorate the building of a gate and part of the wall of the god's sanctuary.[848] On both monuments from Lambaesis and Carnuntum, the existence of god's temple is confirmed, but also of the youth's *collegium*, which means that Jupiter Dolichenus' cult was already established in those two localities in the first half of the 2nd century. Up to the period of Marcus Aurelius, the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus had already spread into the western provinces, certainly due to the establishment of the god's temple on the Aventine Hill in the middle of the 2nd century (later, at the end of the 2nd century, another temple of the god, a *dolichenum* was built in Equilinus).[849] The cult reached its culmination during the Severan dynasty.[850] Beside the *dolichenum* on the Aventine,[851] where mostly civilians venerated the god, other temples of the deity are constated in the area of Trastevere and on the Caelian Hill, which were connected with army, together with the already mentioned *dolichenum* from Equilinus, which was probably visited by civilians and soldiers alike.[852] During the second half of the 3rd century, the monuments of Jupiter Dolichenus started to appear less frequently, and began to slowly disappear towards the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th century. The reasons for the disappearance of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult are ascribed first of all to Maximinius Thrax' destruction of the cult centres on the Rhine and the Danube and later to the destruction of the main temple of the god in Doliche by King Shapur I in 253.[853]

Canonical representations of Jupiter Dolichenus in Roman times show him as a mature, bearded man, standing on a bull's back, wearing a Phrygian hat on his head, dressed in a Roman cuirass with a cloak, holding in one hand a double headed axe and in the other hand a thunderbolt. F. Cumont thought that the axe symbolised the god's power over lightning. The attribute of a thunderbolt represents an Asia Minor motif *par excellence*, typical for Mesopotamian and North Syrian cultures. Similar to the attribute of the thunderbolt, the double headed axe symbolised the divine power of the god and presented together with the motif of a thunderbolt, it emphasised the power of Jupiter Dolichenus. The god is often shown with his paredra, Juno Dolichena, who is standing on a hind, dressed in a long dress and cloak, with a veil (diadem, kalathos), holding a mirror, a poppy, a staff or sometimes a peacock.[854] It seems that her iconography, as a goddess on a hind, similar to Jupiter Dolichenus' imagery, has continuity in the pre-Roman period, because of a local goddess who was also worshipped at Doliche, beside Baal Dolichenus.[855] Usually on Jupiter Dolichenus' monuments, the god is presented alone or with his paredra, but on the monuments of more complex iconography, he can be in the company of his acolytes, Castores Dolicheni and deities like Mars, Hercules, Apollo and Diana, but also Isis, Serapis and Mithras.[856] Sometimes, Jupiter Dolichenus is shown together with the crowned goddess Victoria (on some finds of triangular votive plates of the god, instead of the goddess, a crown is presented as her substitute, most often between Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena).[857] As in the cult of the god Sabazius, three particular kinds of objects of the god were related to his cult - silver plates with the image of Jupiter Dolichenus or Baal and vegetable ornaments, votive hands of the god, and triangular votive plates with his representation. R. Turcan thinks that silver plates with the image of the god represented votive offerings to Jupiter Dolichenus by soldiers (the majority of

[844] The presentation of the god from the stele of Zeyintepe shows him in the described way, as two reliefs from Kurcuoglu, perhaps also dated as Zeyintepe stele in the 1st century, Turcan 1996: 159.

[845] The presentation of *dexiosis* between Jupiter Dolichenus and Roman emperor, in M. P. Speidel's opinion, either signifies the alliance between the god and imperator or denotes the acceptance of the emperor in the worship of the deity, Speidel 1978: 3.

[846] Somewhat disputable evidence of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult, *CCID* 285, num. 434;

[847] *CCID:* 376, num. 620.

[848] Merlat 1951: 110-111, num. 121; *CCID*: 217.

[849] The cult places of Jupiter Dolichenus in Rome were in the *castra priora equitum singularium* on the Caelian Hill, the statio of the cohors II of the vigiles on the Esquiline and on the Aventine, Dészpa 2017: 115.

[850] Turcan 1996: 167.

[851] Chini 1996: 329-347.

[852] Bellelli 1996: 305-326.

[853] After 253, no monuments of Jupiter Dolichenus are known, Speidel 1978: 75.

[854] P. Merlat constates other attributes of a goddess as well, like a patera, sistrum, bipennis or a branch, Merlat 1960: 35.

[855] Collar 2013: 90, ft. 15. P. Merlat and R. Turcan share the opinion that Juno Dolichena mirrored some features of a Hittite/Hurrian goddess Hebat (Hepet), paredra of got Teshub, who was venerated as Mother and Mistress of wild beasts. The hind is a characteristic companion of the goddess, particularly on the territories of Lydia and Maeonia, Ibid: 80-88; Turcan 1996: 160.

[856] Some authors think that complex symbolic ornaments present on Jupiter Dolichenus' monuments serve to attest the god as the master of the world and eternal guardian of the whole cosmos, *conservator totius* poli, as the deity was addressed to in the votive monument from Rome, *CCID* 242, num. 376.

[857] Turcan 1996: 163.

finds were discovered in the hoards of legionary camp Mauer-an-der-Url and capital of Civitas Taunensium, Nida-Heddernheim).[858] Bronze votive hands of Jupiter Dolichenus differed from the votive hands that were the part of Sabazius' cult, because they represented an open right hand with all fingers raised. They can be identified as votive hands of Jupiter Dolichenus by the figure of the god on his bull, as in the case of a votive hand found in Comana in Cappadocia or a votive hand from Heddernheim with a Latin inscription bearing the god's name.[859] The votive hands were, again, similar to Sabazius' votive hands, pierced in the wrist so that they could be fixed on a pole and carried in the ceremonial processions in honour of the god. The attributes shown on them were usually the god's figure on a bull, a bull and a globe.[860]

A. H. Kan mentions that the motif of an open hand symbolised the protection of the god, while E. Schwertheim considered it to be a symbol of blessing or giving a blessing from the hand of the god.[861] While P. Merlat did not believe that votive hands of Jupiter Dolichenus symbolised the god's power and protection, R. Turcan thought them to be a symbol of protection, but also justice and omnipotence.[862] V. Najdenova suggests that the votive hands of Jupiter Dolichenus symbolise, not only his protection, his presence.[863] However, beside being a symbol of the deity's protection and having the function of cult objects carried on poles, votive hands of Jupiter Dolichenus also represented votive offerings to the god by his worshippers, as a sign of thanks for their wishes and hopes that were to be fulfilled by the god. How significant a symbol the motif of an open raised hand was for the god's worshippers is clear from the fact that a colossal hand stood in the *dolichenum* on the Aventine in Rome.[864]

As for triangle votive plates, in scholarly literature many debates about their meaning, symbolism and usage have been had. In the middle of the 19th century, I. Seidl thought that the plates, grouped together as three, represented a pyramid on which Baal of Doliche stood. This opinion was derived by the author due to an analogy with the coins of Tarsus on which a pyramid is presented with an eagle on its top (I. Seidl believed that a pyramid symbolised the mountain from which the cult of the god originated). A. H. Kan found similarities between triangular votive plates and the triangular case with pedestal of Sandan Herakles, shown on coins from Tarsos, where the Baal of the town was shown in relief on bronze pyramids.[865]As R. Turcan noticed, both theories were based on a completely unproved hypothesis that a group of three votive plates symbolised a mountain, that is a pyramid, when no group formed from three triangular votive plates has ever been discovered in any archaeological locality.[866] H. Jacobi thought that a find of a spear near triangular votive plates from Zugmantel in Germania Superior, implied that Roman soldiers fixed them to the top of their spears.[867] F. Lang believed that the function of triangular votive plates of Jupiter Dolichenus was to represent a cult object that was guarded by the god's priests and which was worn during the ceremonial processions in honour of the god as a *signa collegii.* To argue his hypothesis, F. Lang offered two examples of iconographic presentations in which sacral spears can be seen with triangular votive plates on their top, which, in the author's opinion, undoubtedly indicates that the plates were cult symbols of the god.[868] P. Merlat shared a similar opinion, but he emphasised that this kind of cult object had the function to convince Jupiter Dolichenus' worshippers of the symbolism of what they presented, but also in the god's presence during the processions in his honour. The author goes one step further in his hypothesis and believes that with their rich iconography, triangular votive plates mirrored the theology of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult.[869] Other authors, like R. Turcan, S. De Bellis, A. Collar and E. Sanzi, believe that triangular votive plates of the god represented cult objects and also votive offerings to the deity.[870] M. Blömer thinks that the triangular shape of the plates could have represented the cult standard of the goddess Atargatis, known as *semeion,* which would associate the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus with the cult of Atargatis-Dea Syria even closer.[871] It is also possible that the triangular votive plates of Jupiter Dolichenus were, among his adherents, interpreted as *signum Dolicheni*, which would be implied by the inscription from Dura-Europos from 239, in which a signum of Jupiter Dolichenus is mentioned.[872] Whatever the symbolism of triangular votive plates was, worshippers of the god (particularly soldiers), perhaps interpreted their triangular form as the power of a thunderbolt, a symbol of celestial power and strength, but also as a symbol of a soldier's spear, the armour of the god, but also that of soldiers as well.

[858] Soldiers dedicated the silver plates to the god as a gesture of their gratitude to him, Ibid; Collar 2013: 98.
[859] *CCID* 47, num. 43, 326-327, num. 520.
[860] Turcan 1996: 164.
[861] Kan 1943: 32; Schwertheim 1991: 30.
[862] Merlat 1960: 182; Turcan 1996: 164.
[863] Najdenova 1989: 1373.
[864] A large marble hand with an open palm, was found in Jupiter Dolichenus temple on the Aventine, for different opinions in scholarly literature see *CCID* 259, num. 400. Turcan 1996: 164.
[865] Kan 1901: 9 and further.
[866] Turcan 1996: 163.
[867] Bošković-Robert 2006: 225.
[868] Ibid: 226.
[869] Merlat 1960: 175.
[870] Turcan 1996: 163; De Bellis 1997: 455–468; Collar 2013: 97; Sanzi 2013.
[871] Collar 2013: 97, ft. 29.
[872] Text of the inscription from papyrus from 27/28th May 239. year, in which Cohors XX Palmyrenorum is mentioned: *Ael(ius) A[vitus |(centurio) le]g(ionis) praep(ositus) / hibern[is coh(ortis) XX] P[alm(yrenorum) 3]nicit signum / Iovis Dolicheni S(ancti) misit, CCID* 43, num. 39.

Triangular votive plates were usually made of bronze, plated with gold or silver, with iconographic motifs executed by cutting, hammering, chasing or punctuating. Iconographic presentations on these cult objects were usually divided into three parts with different scenes in each part. In the lowest part were the god's companions Castors, signum (cult, military?) or the act of libation.[873] The performing of the libation could also be presented in the central section of the triangular votive plates, together with a centrally placed image of Jupiter Dolichenus or the god with his paredra, Juno Dolichena, with their usual attributes.

In the top register, busts of Sol and Luna were presented, with the figure of an eagle above them.[874] P. Merlat thought that the registers on triangular votive plates of Jupiter Dolichenus were organised hierarchically, by the symbolism they carried and their worth. Therefore, in the lowest register, Castors as symbols of endurance, stability and power, [875] combat symbols like military insignia or *dii militares* Mars, Minerva and Hercules)[876] and symbols of fertility (tree and genius with cornucopia) were presented. The goddess Victoria can also be shown crowning the god, as in the plates from Veliko Trnovo, Komlod, Mauer en der Url and Heddernheim, symbolising a military victory and a triumph of the dedicant.[877] In the central field of the plates, Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena presenting a connection between the worshippers and cosmic forces were shown, while the top register contained symbols of eternal cosmic forces, which represented the emanation of Jupiter Dolichenus.[878] S. de Bellis observes that on all triangular plates three basic spheres are presented: the sphere of mundane life in the lowest register, the divine sphere in the central zone and the celestial sphere in the highest register.[879]

So far, over 20 finds of triangular votive plates are known from different localities of the Roman Empire.[880] S. de Bellis mentions around 20 known finds, of which 13 contain iconographic scenes.[881] A. Collar writes about 12 examples, while N. Gudea numbers 15 triangular votive plates with iconographic presentations.[882] It is quite strange, however, that only N. Gudea mentions the find of a triangular votive plate discovered near Jupiter Dolichenus' *sacrarium* in Brza Palanka (Egeta). Analysing the iconography of so-far known triangular votive plates, it is clear at first glance, that quite a number of figures, motifs and symbols from the theology of the cult had to be presented on the small surface of the objects, so that worshippers would be in a better and more detailed way introduced to the deity's mythology. However, the iconography on triangular votive plates is never the same, it is unique on every so-far known example.[883]

Although little is known about the mythology and theology of Jupiter Dolichenus, the iconography from archaeological monuments implies certain details of ritual practices that were performed in honour of the god. Similar to the cult of Magna Mater, Jupiter Dolichenus' statue was displayed in ceremonial processions, but R. Turcan believes only within the area of his temple on the Aventine, not outside the sacred space, as was case in the cult of Magna Mater.[884] Ceremonial banquets had an important role in the festivities held in the god's honour, while sacrificed animals, primarily a bull, were consumed by the god's priests and worshippers, leaving to one side a part of prepared meal for the god himself.[885]

The priests of Jupiter Dolichenus were obligated, besides organising all the chores in the god's temple and supervising them, to 'take orders in the name of the god' for his approval of certain cult practices. Also, epigraphic monuments imply that Dolichenus' priests were of Asia Minor or Syrian origin, but women were not allowed to be priestess, although they have been confirmed as dedicants on monuments.[886] The cult of the god slowly disappeared towards the end of the 3rd century, with the cult's theology still quite unknown,

[873] Merlat 1960: 175-176.
[874] Ibid.
[875] The images of Jupiter Dolichenus' acolytes, Castores Dolicheni have in the opinion of P. Merlat their iconographical ancestors in the pair of twins from Hurrite culture in the 14th century BC, Merlat 1960: 95-98. In scholarly literature, Castors are also mountain deities, who on one side emphasise god's role as mountain and sky deity, but on the other side they symbolize the aspect of stability. The hypothesis of them being symbols of two hemispheres of the sky was based on the presentation of Castors as the 'columns' of heaven, Sun and moon, argued by the iconography from Heddernheim votive plate, where one Castor is holding a bust of god Sol, while the other holds a bust of goddess Luna, *CCID* 320, num. 512, T. CVIII.
[876] Presentations of Jupiter Dolichenus with *dii militares* emphasise the victorious aspect of god, but also his power and strength as a god of war and protector of soldiers and army, Speidel 1978: 10. This is confirmed by military belts with inscribed prayer *Iuppiter Optime Maxime, conservanumerum omnium militantium,* while soldiers' armours were decorated with the images of Mars, Minerva and Dioscuri, thus putting a soldier in armour under their protection, Henig 1984: 90.
[877] Гавриловић Витас 2019: 188-206.
[878] Bošković-Robert 2006: 229.
[879] de Bellis 1997: 464.
[880] *CCID* num. 5, 6, 80, 103, 142, 174, 186, 201, 202, 259, 288, 294, 295, 327, 328, 475, 511, 512 and 587.
[881] De Bellis 1997: 455.
[882] Collar 2013: 97-98; Gudea 2004: 220.
[883] The differences exist in the way of presenting the scenes inside the registers of the plates, in the detail whether Jupiter Dolichenus is presented alone or with Juno Dolichena and other deities like Victoria, Minerva, Isis, Serapis, Hercules, Mars, and in the motives accompanying the main scene, like an altar, signum/signa, naiskos etc.
[884] Thus the term *lecticari dei,* carriers of the god, confirmed on a marble plate and votive monument found in the area of *dolichenum* in Aventine, *CCID* 240-242, num. 375, 246, 381; Turcan 1996: 164.
[885] Merlat 1960: 202; Pöllath, Peters 2011: 47-69.
[886] Turcan 1996: 166-167; *CCID* 57, num. 65, 111-112, num. 165, 229, num. 363 and 285, num. 433.

unlike the case of Mithras' cult, for example, with the latest monuments being a votive altar from Sucidava in Dacia, a votive monument from Dragoevo in Moesia Inferior dated between 238-244 and a marble plaque from *dolichenum* on the Esquiline, dated in the period of Gallienus' reign (253-268).[887]

4.2. Epigraphic and Archaeological Monuments of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Central Balkans

Beside the gods Jupiter and Mithras, Jupiter Dolichenus is the only god who enjoyed such popularity in the Roman Central Balkans territory in Antiquity. Most of the god's monuments encompass epigraphic material, but also sculptures, two triangular votive plates, bronze and terracotta figurines.

Epigraphic monuments dedicated to the god Jupiter Dolichenus comprise various types: altars, *tabulae ansatae*, but also bases of statues on which the deity was presented. Mapping the monuments has implied their concentration in the localities of the Danube Limes and their absence from central and western parts of the Central Balkans. The majority of the monuments are dedicated to the god whose epithet Dolichenus sometimes appears in incorrect forms like Doliceno, Dulceno and Dolicino. Of 17 epigraphic monuments, 15 are dedicated to the god alone, while on two monuments the dedications are made to the god and the genius of the Colonia Ratiaria, that is the genius of Jupiter Dolichenus and Asclepius. Most frequently the dedicants erected monuments for their health and the health of their family, but also for the health of the emperors Caracalla, Elagabalus and the empress Julia Domna. The flourishing of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult in the Central Balkans was actually connected to the rulers from the Severan dynasty, with almost half of the known monuments dated to the period of their reign, from 193 to 235. The earliest monuments appeared at the end of the 2nd century, while the latest were not later than the first half of the 3rd century.

The first epigraphic monument was found in Arčar, Ratiaria and represents a votive stele which is carved quite summarily (cat. 1). The dedication is made to Dolicenus Iupiter and besides the reverse order of the god's name and epithet, the incorrect form of Dolichenus attracts the attention. P. Merlat thought that it was an argument for assuming an Oriental origin of the dedicant, whose name Aurelius Surianus suggests that he could have been Oriental.[888] However, M. Mirković finds the forms of the name Surianus (Surus, Surio, Surentus) in eastern parts of Moesia Superior, concluding that persons with those names were probably of Illyrian of Thrace origin.[889] M. Šašel-Kos connects the name with Celtic ethnicity, because Surus was a very frequent name among Celts in Noricum and Pannonia.[890] Here, I would like to emphasise that the name Surus is known from several epigraphic monuments from Viminacium and in some cases it seems that it represents rather an ethnonym than a personal name.[891] Aurelius Surianus' reason for dedicating the monument to Jupiter Dolichenus is perhaps the restoration of the god's temple, which would then, since there is no indication if the dedicant was a soldier or not, strengthen the hypothesis that Surianus was an Oriental making a dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus at the end of the 2nd century.[892]

The second votive altar dedicated to the god from Arčar, but found in the area of the Roman castrum is, unfortunately, in a fragmented state (cat. 2). However, it can be deduced that the monument was dedicated for the health of two emperors, probably for rulers from the Severi dynasty, at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century.[893]

The third dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus, also discovered in the territory of the Roman castrum in Arčar, represents a very interesting monument because of the dedicants' quite unusual names – Pecta and Guga, who were priests of the god. The name Pecta could be a gentile name, while Guga is a cognomen, which could indicate that Pecta and Guga were indigenous inhabitants (cat. 3).[894] However, the possibility of their Oriental origin should be considered, because Dolichenus' priests were usually Orientals. The two priests of Jupiter Dolichenus erected the monument for the health of emperors – perhaps Elagabal or, more probably, Caracalla, which would date the monument to the period around 217.[895]

The fourth votive monument dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus is also from Arčar and bears a dedication for the health of the unit's commander, Titus Iulius Optatus, by Lucius Licinius Terminalis (cat. 4).[896] On the right lateral side of the monument, an eagle

[887] Speidel 1978: 73-75.
[888] Merlat 1951: 40, num. 42.
[889] Mirković 1968: 131, ft. 139.
[890] Bošković-Robert 2006: 56, num. 60.
[891] *IMS* II: num. 53, 88b. In the case of the monument under the number 161 in *IMS* II, it seems that Surus is an ethnonym. The veteran Aurelius Maxim(-ianus?,-ienus?, -ilianus?,-inianus?,-inus) is attested on an epigraphic monument discovered in 2004. year in the Roman baths in Viminacium, Ferjančić, Korać, Ricl 2017: 243, num. 9.
[892] *CCID* 84, num. 109.
[893] Merlat 1951: 40, num. 43; Zotović 1966: 46; *CCID* 84, num. 110.
[894] Merlat 1951: 41, num. 45.
[895] Ibid.
[896] P. Merlat suggests that Titus Iulius Optatus was a commander of a unit in which Lucius Licinius Terminalis served, with what Lj. Zotović agrees, Merlat 1951: 41, Zotović 1966: 86. The cognomen Optatus is attested on other inscriptions from Central Balkans, that is on the localities Koraćica, *IMS* I: 140-141, num. 126; Kostolac, *IMS* II: 107, num. 67, 142-143, num. 131; village Mirkovci (north from Skoplje, Scupi), *IMS* VI: 71, num. 37.

is presented, while on the left side is a motif of a thunderbolt. The gentile name of Licinius is attested on several inscriptions from the Central Balkans, unlike the cognomen Terminalis.[897] Perhaps both persons, Titus Iulius Optatus and Lucius Licinius Terminalis, were immigrants of Oriental origin,[898] stationed in Arčar in the 3rd century.[899]

The votive monument found in the locality of Košava, near Vidin, is dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus and the genius of the Colonia Ratiaria (cat. 5). The dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus from the Roman castrum near Vidin does not, unfortunately, contain the name of the dedicant, but the reason for the dedication is the health of two emperors, presumably Septimius Severus and Caracalla, which would date the monument to the period between 198 and 208.[900]

A bronze *tabella ansata* with a dedication to the god by his priest Aurelius Bassus as 'servus eis', was discovered within the Roman castrum in the locality of Jasen (Romulianum), near Vidin (cat. 6). The cognomen Bassus is frequently met in Roman provinces of the Central Balkans[901] and M. Mirković presumes it is of Thracian origin, while B. Dragojević-Josifovska considers it is of Asia Minor or Semitic origin, which would be supported by the inscription from Scupi, where is it noted that the dedicant Bassus was from Antioch.[902] S. Ferjančić believes that the word from which the cognomen Bassus is derived is not a Latin word, so the cognomen could be Thracian, but, in her opinion, there are no indications for either argument.[903] As for the formula 'servus eius', P. Merlat thinks that it should be interpreted as 'servus dei', as Aurelius Bassus obviously considered himself in the context towards Jupiter Dolichenus, to whom he made the dedication, probably during the first half of the 3rd century.[904]

Another dedication (cat. 7) was also found inside the Roman castrum in the locality of Jasen (Romulianum) in the vicinity of Vidin, again in the form of a fragmented bronze *tabella ansata*, made by Flavius Sabinus, Valeria and a few other persons, whose names unfortunately are not preserved (P. Merlat thinks that besides Flavius Sabinus and Valeria, the names of the other dedicants should be reconstructed as Vibius and Valentinus or Valentianus).[905] The cognomen Sabinus can be seen in many epigraphic monuments from Moesia Superior, Dalmatia, Moesia Inferior, Dacia and Pannonia.[906] Unfortunately, because of the fragmented state of the monument, Flavius Sabinus' origin or profession cannot be assumed. The monument can be approximately dated to the end of the 2nd century or into the 3rd century.

A monument dedicated to Jupiter Dulcenus is known from the fragmented base of a marble statue found inside the Roman castrum in the locality of Pincum (cat. 8).[907] In the god's epithet Dulcenus, we can observe a vulgar Latin variant known from 16 inscriptions from the Roman provinces of Noricum, Dalmatia, Dacia, Pannonia Inferior, Raetia and Ostia.[908] Twenty eight silver plates found in *dolichenum* in Mauer an der Url present a good example regarding the name variant Dulcenus.[909] However, the dedicants of the Pincum monument are Aelius Silvanus and Leonides, who P. Merlat suspects were strangers, because of the incorrect form of the god's epithet, but also because of other linguistic errors in the inscription.[910] The cognomen Leonides is known from only two other monuments – from Raetia and Africa,[911] while the cognomen Silvanus has been confirmed on inscription from Sopište, south of Scupi, but also Spain, Numidia, etc.[912] Although both dedicants were *signiferi*, the name of the legion to which they belonged is missing. M. Mirković thinks that it could be the Legion VII Claudia, since a number of bricks with a stamp of Legion VII Claudia were found in the locality of Pincum, which is located in the immediate vicinity of the legion's castrum.[913] The name of the god and the stylistic characteristics of the monument imply local work of mediocre quality from the 3rd century.

Another inscription on which the epithet of the god was written in an incorrect form is known from a Roman castrum in the locality of Čezava, found during archaeological excavations in 1980 (cat. 9).[914] A bronze *tabella ansata* dated to the end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 3rd century bears a dedication to Jupiter Dolicinus by a certain Marcus Cocceius Zevxius, but there is no other information about the dedicant's profession or social status. In the erroneously written

[897] *IMS* II: 58. While gentile name Licinius is frequent, cognomen Terminalis is known only from two monuments from Pannonia, one monument from Italy and one monument from Gallia, Bošković-Robert 2006: 53.
[898] Bošković-Robert 2006: 53.
[899] Merlat 1951: num. 44.
[900] Ibid: 42; *CCID* 86.
[901] The cognomen Bassus is confirmed on several localities of Moesia Superior as Kostolac, *IMS* II: 84, num. 46, 110-111, num. 73; Rutevac, *IMS* III/2: 115-116, num. 97; Skoplje, *IMS* VI: 107, num. 95, but also on different localities of Moesia Inferior (even on eight inscriptions), Dalmatia, Pannonia Superior and Pannonia Inferior, Dacia, Italy, Spain etc., Bošković-Robert 2006: 54.
[902] *IMS* II: 84, num. 46; *IMS* VI: 107, num. 95.
[903] Ферјанчић 2002: 81, ft. 323.
[904] Merlat 1951: 43, num. 48.
[905] Ibid: 43-44, num. 49.
[906] Bošković-Robert 2006: 55, ft. 158.
[907] Merlat 1951: 50-51, num. 52.
[908] The epithet Dulcenus is known from eight inscriptions in Noricum, one in Dalmatia, two in Dacia, three in Pannonia Inferior, one in Ostia and one in Raetia, Vágási 2019: 543-544.
[909] Ibid: 545.
[910] *CCID*: 71, n. 86.
[911] *AE* 1960: 90.
[912] *IMS* VI: 143, num. 156; Bošković-Robert 2006: 47, ft. 299.
[913] Mirković 1968: 101-102.
[914] Васић 1980: 91-120.

epithet of the god, Dolicinus, a vulgar Latin form can again be observed. These vulgar forms of the epithet Dolichenus appear from the 3rd century, as a consequence of the changes in the living language and are found only in the dedications of common people, never on monuments erected by Jupiter Dolichenus' priests or educated persons.[915] The cognomen Zevxius is very rare and appears on two monuments from Dacia and Gallia.[916] It could have been derived from the Greek names Zeuxis or Zeuxidis and it could designate a freeman or a descendant of a freeman.[917]

A votive altar found inside the Roman fortification in the locality of Karataš (Diana), is dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus by Lucius Marius Perpetuus, who was a well known person from the 3rd century (cat. 10). First he was the commander of the Legion XVI Flavia Felicis, then the consul of the province of Arabia (probably until 202) and finally, between 208 and 214, a governor of Moesia Superior and the curator of two towns.[918] After 214, he became a governor of Dacia.[919] An important person during the reign of the Severi; a general of Emperor Septimius Severus during the civil wars, after his governing of Syria Coela, Lucius Marius Perpetuus became proconsul of Africa and Asia, an urban prefect and consul in 223.[920] The monument from Karataš informs us that in the function of governor of Moesia Superior, Lucius Marius Perpetuus dedicated a votive altar for the well-being of the emperor Caracalla and his mother Julia Domna. The absence of Geta's name should imply 211 as the *terminus post quem.*[921] M. Mirković suggests that the governor of Moesia Superior erected the altar during Caracalla's visit of the fortifications in Karataš in 214.[922] What is most interesting is that the votive altar was found inside a niche where, presumably, ritual practices in honour of Jupiter Dolichenus were performed, therefore the existence of a *dolichenum* in Karataš can be presumed.[923]

The last known *tabella ansata* dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus was found in the Danube Limes locality of Brza Palanka (Egeta), in the *sacrarium* of the god, with a dedication of soldiers from the Cohors I Cretum (the letters of the inscription are made by punctuation, as the frame of the object) (cat. 14). The Cohors I Cretum was stationed twice in the oldest of three forts in Brza Palanka; from 93 to 100 and from 159 to the end of the 3rd century.[924] Dedications to Jupiter Dolichenus from cohorts are known from other provinces including Germania Superior, Syria and Dacia.[925] In the territory of the Central Balkans, dedications to different gods from other military units are known as well. Thus, Legio IV Flavia, stationed in Belgrade (Singidunum) and Cohors II Aurelia Dardanonum, stationed in Ravna (Timacum Minus), dedicated votive altars to Gordian III.[926] At the end of the 3rd or in the beginning of the 4th century, Legia VII Claudia erected a votive monument to the god Neptune in Viminacium,[927] while a vexillatio of Legia VII Claudia, temporarily station in Ram (Pincum), dedicated a monument to the god Jupiter.[928] Due to other finds discovered at the presumed place of the *sacrarium* of a *dolichenum* in Brza Palanka, the *tabella ansata* is dated to the middle of the 3rd century.[929]

A fragmented statue of Jupiter Dolichenus standing on a bull, with the inscription dedicated to the god represents another object found in the presumed *sacrarium* in Brza Palanka, but dated somewhat earlier than the previous find of the *tabella ansata*, to the end of the 2nd century or the beginning of the 3rd century (cat. 15). The dedicant was a certain Pompeius Isauricus, whose gentile name Pompeius is known from Viminacium and its surroundings. The cognomen Isauricus implies that the dedicant originated from Isauria in southern Asia Minor, near Doliche.[930] As for the statue of the god, the partial figure of a bull is preserved together with the god's feet. The figure of the bull is not so skilfully and realistically modelled – the animal's head is too small in contrast with its strong neck and body and is turned to the right.[931] Around the

[915] T. Vágási notices that a vulgar Latin form of the epithet Dolichenus appears only on the monuments discovered on military sites and by dedicators who are often soldiers, Vágási 2019: 546.
[916] Bošković-Robert 2006: 48, num. 50.
[917] For Zeuxis, *CIL* VI, 3927, 15325, 21650, 29635. For Zeuxidis *CIL* VI, 4200; *CIL* XI, 4423.
[918] Gilliam 1958: 229, ft. 15.
[919] Mirković 1977: 445-446.
[920] Gilliam 1958: 230.
[921] Bošković-Robert 2006: 51.
[922] Mirković 1977: 446-447.
[923] *CCID*: 71-72, n. 87; Mirković 2015: 92, num. 39.
[924] Cohors I Cretum was formed in the pre-Flavian period and (beside Cohors I Cilicum) was the part of the, so far known, oldest military units located in Naissus (Cohors I Cretum is confirmed as Moesia's cohort on a military diploma from 78), *IMS* IV: 34; Mirković 2015: 42–43. It was located in Moesia Superior in the period of the preparations for Trajan's Dacian wars (confirmed by military diplomas from 93 and 100 year), Mirković 1968: 115. A considerable number of bricks from the locality Banatska Palanka wears the stamps of military units which participated in Trajan's Dacian wars, among them the name of cohors I Cretum is also encountered, Mirković 2015: 71; Marcu 2004: 582–583. It is also recorded on the military diplomas from Moesia Inferior in 94 and 96 and Dacia in 110 and 114, Marcu 2004: 583. After a temporary stay in Dacia, the cohort returned to the territory of the province Moesia Superior (attested on a military diploma from 159/160, where it stayed during the 2nd and the 3rd century.
[925] Several dedications from cohortxs have been found in Germania Superior, like the one from the altar in Roman fort Saalburg, on which cohors II Raetorum is the dedicant or the altar from Micia in Dacia, where the dedication is made by cohors II Flavia Commagenorum, Speidel 1978: 5, num. 3, 6, num. 4, 8, num. 11.
[926] *IMS* I: 24; *IMS* III/2: 22.
[927] *IMS* II: 38.
[928] *IMS* II: 293.
[929] Zotović 1966: 94-96; *CCID* 71-72, num. 87.
[930] Mirković 1968: 115; Zotović 1966: 92; *CCID* 76-77, n. 91.
[931] The right horn and ear of a bull are saved, while on the place of the bull's left horn, there is an iron screw which served for the wedging of a horn, which was probably modelled from another part of the marble or metal. Under the screw, remains of silver foil are visible, which imply a kind of silver ornament, perhaps rosetta, attached to a bull's forehead, Zotović 1964: 7, num. 2c.

back and under the belly of the bull, a ritual (sacrificial) band, or *dorsuale,* is presented, which makes it clear that the animal was intended for a ceremonial sacrifice in honour of the god.[932]

The *sacrarium* of Jupiter Dolichenus' temple in Brza Palanka yielded one more monument of the god, in the shape of a fragmented marble statue of the deity with a Greek inscription on the base, in which a vow is made to *κυριω Δολιχηνω* (cat. 16). By the remains of the god's figure, it can be seen that he was shown en face, dressed in Roman military dress, with a long paludamentum over his shoulders, and a thunderbolt in his left hand and probably a bipennis in his raised right hand (the attribute is missing). On the rectangular base with the inscription, below the bull's belly, an eagle with outstretched wings is presented, similar to that on the marble statuette of the god from Marseille.[933] The dedicant is Castor, son of Kointos, who could have been of Greek or Oriental origin, with the name attested multiple times in different Central Balkan localities, as well as in other Roman provinces.[934] As with the previous monument, the statuary presentation of Jupiter Dolichenus is dated to the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century.[935]

In the southern part of the Roman Central Balkans, three monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus have been attested. A votive altar discovered in Kumanovo, of a dedicant Achilleus, was dedicated to the health of the emperor Caracalla and his mother, Julia Domna, during the reign of consuls Sabinus II and Anulinus (cat. 11). The name Achilleus is confirmed not only in different localities of the Central Balkans, but also in the provinces of Moesia Inferior, Dalmatia, Pannonia, Dacia, Italy, Gallia Narbonensis, etc.[936] Achilleus was Jupiter Dolichenus' priest, which is not surprising except that the god's priests were usually found on the epigraphic monuments from the Danube Limes localities and not in the interior of the territory, which would explain the spread of the cult into smaller centres and rural localities. A votive altar dedicated to the god Mithras was found either in Kumanovo or perhaps Scupi, with a dedicant of the same name.[937] Since the names of consuls are mentioned on the inscription, the Kumanovo monument is dated to the 1st November 216.

Another quite intriguing votive altar was discovered in Gračanica, dedicated by two priests of Jupiter Dolichenus, Demetrius, son of Ambibius and Victor, son of Demetrius (cat. 12). The two priests erected the monument for the health of two emperors, whose names are not stated. G. Alföldi counts the name Demetrius among Greek names and the name has been known from two more Central Balkan monuments, but also from monuments found in Moesia Inferior, Spain, Gallia, Italy, etc.[938] The name of the dedicant Ambibius is probably of Oriental origin.[939] The two dedicants are perhaps father and son – Demetrius, son of Ambibius and Victor, son of Demetrius.[940]Again, we have the same situation as in the case of a previous monument; the presence of the god's priests in the interior of the Central Balkans territory, where they spread his cult. Although the names of the Roman emperors to whom the dedication is made are not stated, it is presumed that the rulers in question were Septimius Severus and Caracalla and, thus, the suggested period for the erection of the monument would be between 208 and 211.[941]

A unique monument in the territory of the Roman Central Balkans dedicated to the god Asclepius and the genius of Jupiter Dolichenus was found in Prizren (cat. 13). Above the inscription field, a relief presentation of the god Asclepius is shown, holding a staff with an entwined snake in his right hand and an unknown object in his left hand.[942] Beside the god, a smaller figure is presented in a long cloak (possibly Asclepius' son, Telesphoros). Beside the small figure, a female dressed in a long chiton is also presented (Hygieia?). Since the top of the votive altar is missing, some authors have suggested that the names of Telesphoros and Hygieia were written there.[943] In M. P. Speidel's opinion, *Genio Doliceni* would be a shorter name for *Gen(io) I(ovis) O(ptimi) M(aximi) Doliceni,* by the analogy with an inscription from Noricum where the formula Genio MD, represents a shorter version of Genio M(aximi)

[932] Ritual ribbon, *dorsuale,* probably made of wool, is often seen in the way it is presented fragmented base of a statue from Egeta or it just falls over animal's back hanging down on both sides. It isn't presented only in Dolichenus' iconography, but also in Mithraic reliefs from Bologna, Sarmizegetusa, Oltenia and Transdierna, Mastrocinque 2017: 38. Also, in the cult of Isis and Serapis, some Pompeian depicts Apis' bull with the *dorsuale* on his back, Ibid: 163.

[933] *CCID* num. 602.

[934] The name Castor is known from the monuments from locality Drmno, *IMS* II: 84, num. 46 and locality Ravna, *IMS* III/2: 109, num. 67. Lj. Zotović thinks that the name *Κοιντος* presents an old form of the Roman name Quintus, Zotović 1966: 91.

[935] Although D. Srejović and A. Cermanović-Kuzmanović date the monument to the period of the 2nd -3rd century, Lj. Zotović puts the monument's chronology in a narrower frame, Zotović 1966: 91.

[936] Beside the monument from Kumanovo, the name Achilleus is confirmed on a monument found in Čair, Kostolac (Viminacium), *IMS* II: 80, num. 41 and from two monuments discovered in Ravna, Timacum Minus, *IMS* II: 119-120, num. 84, *IlJug* 1986, 1354; Bošković-Robert 2006: 89, num. 102.

[937] Zotović 1966: 100-101, num. 42.

[938] The name Demetrius is known from the monuments found in Singidunum and Guberevac, *IMS* I: 60, num. 28, 144, num. 133.

[939] Bošković-Robert 2006: 96-97, num. 111.

[940] Ibid.

[941] *CCID* 85, num. 115. However, A. and J. Šašel think that in the third row of the inscription, the name of emperor Geta should be recognized, so that the monument is actually dedicated to Septimius Severus and Geta, *IlJug* 1986, 1416.

[942] Above the male figure holding a staff with a snake, a name of god Asclepius is inscribed, Speidel 1980: 182-183.

[943] M. Dušanić argues her presumption with analogous monument from Peć, with the dedication to Asclepius, Hygieia and Telesphoros, Душанић 1983: 30, ft. 16.

D(olicheni).[944] However, A. Bošković-Robert observes that on the Noricum inscription, the epithet Maximus is present (missing from the Prizren monument), therefore, a direct analogy between the two monuments cannot be made.[945] The naming of Genius Dolichenus as *paterno deo* could indicate that the deity was a god of the dedicant's Surus homeland.[946] In that case, since Jupiter Dolichenus was an Asia Minor god, the name Surus would designate an Oriental dedicant, who was an active soldier, perhaps of the Cohors I Aurelia Dardanorum.[947] Even Surus' cognomen of Heraclitus does not help with a closer determination of his origin, because it is known only from one monument from Prizren.[948] Equally unclear is the meaning of *genius cortis*, which, in M. P. Speidel's opinion, could mark the genius of an auxiliary cohors, but could also indicate the god Jupiter Cohortalis.[949] M. Dušanić suggests that in the part of the Prizren inscription, in the line 'rus et pro', there is a visible letter 'm' between the letters 's' and 'e', which could be restored as [m]et(allarius) pro(curatoris), which would make Surus the procurator of the province Dardania or the procurator of Dardanian mines.[950]

In the territory of Roman provinces, only three monuments dedicated to a genius of Jupiter Dolichenus are known (including the votive altar from Prizren). On the monuments from Noricum and Pannonia, the dedication is made to the genius of Jupiter Dolichenus and not to his association with another deity or deities, as is the case with Prizren monument.[951] However, the votive altar discovered in Prizren is not dedicated only to the genius of Jupiter Dolichenus, but also to the iatric god Asclepius, probably in association with Hygieia and Telesphoros. Since another votive monument dedicated to god Asclepius was discovered in Prizren, it can be presumed that a sanctuary dedicated to Asclepius existed in the area of Prizren, where the existence of a beneficiary station can be presumed too (probably linked with the road Naissus-Lissus).[952] The dedications to Asclepius or Asclepius and Hygieia are attested multiple times in Central Balkans' monuments,[953] while monuments with inscriptions dedicated to Asclepius, Hygieia and Telesphorus are much rarer and known from the locality Peć, sites from Moesia Inferior, Thrace and localities in Asia Minor.[954] The fact that the dedication from Prizren monument is made to a genius of *par excellence* deus militaris as Jupiter Dolichenus was and deities of iatric character, makes one wonder under which aspect the god was venerated here?[955] The cults of two gods, Jupiter Dolichenus and Asclepius were associated in the *dolichenum* from Trastevere in Rome and their union is not rare, being venerated by soldiers and civilians. However, whether the dedicant Surus was a soldier or not, we cannot resolve without sufficient data, but it is quite clear that on the Prizren monument, Jupiter Dolichenus' genius was respected with an iatric dimension, as the protector of health and well-being.[956] This presumption is allowed not only by the god's association with Asclepius (and probably Hygieia and Telesphoros), but also on the basis of analogous monuments, on which, sometimes, the formula *pro salute* is present.[957] The monument from Prizren is even more interesting because it represents one of the earliest testimonies of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult in the Central Balkans, dated to the 2nd century.

The last known epigraphic monument of Jupiter Dolichenus was discovered in the village of Kličevac (cat. 17), situated in the vicinity of Viminacium and, although it is damaged in its lower part of the inscription field, from the text it is clear that the priest of Jupiter Dolichenus, Aurelius Julianus from the province of Syria Coele, the region of Cyrrhus, in the village of Capersin(a?), made the dedication to the

[944] *AE* 1975, 668; Speidel 1980: 183.
[945] Bošković-Robert 2006: 106.
[946] Speidel 1980: 183.
[947] B. Dragojević-Josifovska thinks that the name Surus can be met equally among Thracians, Celts and Illyrians, but also among the population of Semitic origin, *IMS* VI: 96. M. Speidel suggests that if the Genius of an auxiliary cohort was meant on Prizren inscription, the dedicant could have been in active service, as a soldier of perhaps cohors I Aurelia Dardanorum, who didn't feel the need to name his unit if the altar was placed in a temple belonging to the members of the same cohors, Speidel 1980: 183.
[948] The cognomen Heraclitus is known only from votive altar from Prizren, but it is frequent in Italy, although the monuments with this cognomen are known from Pannonia and Dacia, Bošković-Robert 2006: 107.
[949] Speidel 1980: 183-184.
[950] Душанић 1983: 31.
[951] The dedications to Genius of Jupiter Dolichenus are known from Noricum, Pannonia Superior and Moesia Superior, *AE* 1975, 668; *CIL* III, 4401; *ILJug* 1986, 1438.
[952] Another votive monument dedicated to god Asclepius was discovered in Prizren, built in the walls of the medieval church St. Sunday as *spolia*. The inscription was placed above and under the relief presentation of the god (in the upper part of the monument). Asclepius is shown standing leant on staff with an entwined snake, as a mature, bearded man holding a phiale in his right hand. The dedication to the iatric god was made by six dedicants, whose names are given in a short form. The inscription reads: Κυρίω Άσκληπιω Σωτήρι | εθη | καν | Μικ ( ), Γαι ( ), Άσκλη ( ) | Ουα ( ), Δημη ( ), Άρτε ( ) | ύπερ της εαυτων | σωτηρίας δωρον. Judging by the short forms of dedicants' names, their low social status of either slaves or freedmen can be assumed, as their Greek or Oriental origin, since the dedication is made in the Greek language, Душанић 1983: 27-32. The hypothesis about the beneficiary station in the area of Prizren is supported by the discovery of a votive monument from the village Škoza, where the dedicant is a beneficiarius consularis of Legio VII Claudia, Вулић 1931: 133, num. 321.
[953] See Gavrilović Vitas 2020: 67-83.
[954] Bošković-Robert 2006: 223.
[955] Beside the inscription from the votive altar from Prizren, two more inscriptions are dedicated to Asclepius and Jupiter Dolichenus, from the locality Cibinium in Dacia and from the locality in Numidia, where the dedication is made to Asclepius, Hygieia and Jupiter Dolichenus, Merlat 1951: 35, num. 37, 285, num. 290.
[956] Душанић 1983: 27-32.
[957] Discussing the eschatological and soteriological nature of Jupiter Dolichenus, R. Turcan concluded that the formula *pro salute* addressed to the god on the monuments, doesn't have any connection with the eventual 'saving' of the dedicant in the Afterlife, Turcan 1996: 168; Merlat 1951, 35, num. 37, 281, num. 286, 285, num. 290, 320, num. 324.

deity.[958] Priests of Asia Minor and Syrian deities have been attested in the Central Balkans territory, while the names of immigrants of the same origin are known from Viminacium and the wider area.[959] It is possible that Aurelius Iulianus or his parent obtained Roman citizenship under Caracalla and that he stayed for an unknown period of time (or lived?) in Viminacium, spreading the cult of the god in Central Balkan centres around the middle of the 3rd century, when the monument from Kličevac was erected.[960]

Sculptural and statuary representations of Jupiter Dolichenus are not so numerous in the Central Balkans territory. The canonical image of the god is presented, mostly alone and sometimes with his paredra Juno Dolichena. All sculptural and statuary finds were discovered either in large urban centres like Vidin and Viminacium, Danube Limes localities (Čezava-Novae) or in significant Roman fortifications, like Ravna, Timacum Minus.

A fragmented marble sculpture of a mature, bearded man with a Phrygian hat and dressed in a short tunic with armour, with paludamentum covering his shoulders, was found in the vicinity of the locality of Vidin, Bononia (cat. 18). The god is holding a thunderbolt in his left hand, while, judging by the position of his right arm, it can be presumed that his right hand was raised and that he was probably holding a *bipennis* in it. This type of Jupiter Dolichenus iconography was modelled by the sculptures presenting 'armoured Roman emperors'.[961] P. Merlat presumes that the sculptural group of Jupiter Dolichenus from Vidin also presented a bull on which the god is leaning (the figure of the bull is missing).[962] Iconographically, the statues most similar to the Vidin find are the Jupiter Dolichenus statue from Čezava, and also the statue from Rome, where the god is presented in the same way (the clothes, the Phrygian hat, etc.)[963] and the statue from the village of Prapor (Amarastii de Jos) in Dacia.[964] The sculpture is dated to the end of the 2nd or the first decade of the 3rd century.

A very skilfully modelled marble head of Jupiter Dolichenus, probably belonging to the type of iconographic representations showing the god standing on a bull with the attributes of a thunderbolt and a bipennis in his hands, was found in Viminacium (cat. 19). The head is of a mature, bearded man with carefully modelled curly head and a Phrygian hat on the head. The eyes are plastically sculpted, as are the nose and mouth, while the cheekbones are somewhat emphasised. Jupiter Dolichenus' head from Viminacium is iconographically very similar to the statuary composition of the god from Brza Palanka (Egeta), but also to the statue from the locality of Desa.[965] Judging by the stylistic characteristics of the Viminacium find, it is probably dated to the first half of the 3rd century.

Unfortunately a lost fragmented statue of Jupiter Dolichenus on a bull, also discovered in Viminacium, consisted of only the preserved bull's figure, the right foot of the god and part of paludamentum which fell onto the animal's neck (cat. 20). On the bull's figure, traces of a saddle were visible. Analogous to the sculptures of Jupiter Dolichenus on a bull from Brza Palanka, the statue was dated to the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century.[966]

In the locality of Čezava, where the *tabella ansata* with the dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus was found, another confirmation of the god's cult was discovered, in the shape of a fragmented statue of a man in armour, standing in a contrapposto position on his left leg (cat. 21).[967] The statue was found during archaeological excavations inside the Roman castrum. Although the statue is quite damaged (the head, both arms and both lower legs of the god are missing), the short tunic and cuirass over it, with traces of the paludamentum are clear. It is presumed that Jupiter Dolichenus held his usual attributes, a thunderbolt and a double headed axe in his hands. The find from Čezava is very similar to the statue from Vidin and is presumably from the same period, the end of the 2nd or the first decade of the 3rd century (the period of Septimius Severus or Caracalla).

A fragmented marble statue of a woman standing on a hind's back was also discovered in the locality of Čezava, probably presenting Juno Dolichena on the hind's back (cat. 22).[968] Unfortunately, of the woman's figure, only part of the long hiton and right foot were preserved, and part of the hind's head, torso and two front paws. The animal was presented en face with the body turned on the right side. The stylistic characteristics imply a summary presentation, probably of a local artisan, who modelled the statue in the 2nd or at the beginning of the 3rd century (period of Septimius Severus or Caracalla).

I have already presented some of the finds discovered in Brza Palanka' *sacrarium*, to whose corpus of Jupiter Dolichenus monuments a marble head of a mature

[958] Petrović 2004: 220. In the author's opinion the village Capersina can be identified with the locality Capersana, mentioned by Ammianus Marcelinus. However, other authors identify the village of Capersana with the place Caphrena, Ibid: 221, ft. 29.
[959] *IMS* II: 157-158, num. 161, 162-163, num. 169, 175-176, num. 211-213.
[960] Petrović 2004: 221.
[961] Merlat 1951: 42, num. 47; Tomović 1993: 86, num. 63.
[962] Merlat 1951: 42, num. 47.
[963] Tomović 1993: 86.
[964] Popa, Berciu 1978: 1, num. 1.
[965] Merlat 1951: 37, num. 40.
[966] Tomović 1993: 123, num. 231.
[967] Ibid: 85-86, num. 62; Bošković-Robert 2006: 147, D3.
[968] Ibid: 95, num. 98, fig. 44.1; Bošković-Robert 2006: 147-148, D4.

bearded man with a Phrygian hat should be added (cat. 23).[969] Similarly to the deity's head from Viminacium, it presents a carefully modelled head of a mature man with a beard and curls that surround the bearded face. This iconographic representation of Jupiter Dolichenus somewhat draws its analogies with known presentations of Hephaestus, Odysseus and Charon from Greek sculpture and reliefs of the Classic period in the 4th century BC.[970] The head of Jupiter Dolichenus probably belonged to a sculptural group of the god standing on a bull's back, which was made at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century.

Another marble fragmented sculptural presentation of Jupiter Dolichenus on a bull's back is known from the Brza Palanka's *sacrarium*, displaying only the god's feet on a bull's back with the remains of a paludamentum (cat. 24).[971] However, compared to other statuary finds from the *sacrarium*, this statue is more skilfully modelled, presenting the bull with his head en face, while his body is turned to the right side. Iconographic similarities exist with the statue of Jupiter Dolichenus from Ravna, Timacum Minus, with the difference that the statue from the deity's *sacrarium* is much better work, probably dating from the period of the end of the 2nd century or the first half of the 3rd century.

Perhaps the most interesting find from the *sacrarium* discovered in Brza Palanka, although in a fragmentary state, is a marble statuary composition of Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena (cat. 25).[972] The god is presented standing on a bull's back, while the goddess stands on a hind. Between the two deities, the goddess Victoria is shown. Jupiter Dolichenus is wearing Roman military dress, with a Phrygian hat on his head and a thunderbolt in his left hand. The attribute of, probably, a bipennis is missing from his right hand. The facial features of the god are not so recognisable, due to the monument's condition, but the curly hair and beard are clearly presented. Juno Dolichena stands on a hind's back, dressed in a long chiton with short sleeves, with a cloak over her left shoulder. In her right hand, the goddess is holding a patera, while in her left hand is a long sceptre. The figures of the animals are very realistically presented, as are the folds of the deities' clothes. On the hind's back, an eagle is shown with half-spread wings. The iconographic characteristics of the marble statuary group of Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena are not similar to thus far known finds, such as the statuary composition from Virinum in Noricum, which is static and more rigidly modelled than the statue from Brza Palanka.[973] The stylistic characteristic of the statue date it to the period from which all other statues from the sacrarium are dated – the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century.

A marble statue of Jupiter Dolichenus on a bull, discovered in Ravna, Timacum Minus is heavily damaged and what is left of it is just the animal's figure moving to the right. On the bull's back the remains of the god's feet are recognisable (cat. 26).[974] The figure of the bull is very realistically presented, although it has, as some other figures of the animal from Central Balkan finds, a wider neck. The fragmented statue is dated at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century.

Probably the most skilful sculpture of Jupiter Dolichenus is that from Karataš, Diana, discovered in the area where the god's sanctuary or shrine is presumed (cat. 27).[975] Unfortunately, only the head of a larger sculpture or sculptural composition has been found, but still representing a unique find of this type of Dolichenus' sculptures in the territory of Central Balkans. The head represents a mature man en face, with a beard and curly hair under the Phrygian hat. On the hat, a laurel wreath with an oval medallion is presented (*corona gemata*). Face features are modelled skilfully – large oval eyes without pupils, wide nose and full cheeks. The artisan very knowingly modelled god's face surrounded by curly hair, in a way that representative imperial sculptures begin to be presented at the end of the 2nd century or at the beginning of the 3rd century. The manner of modelling the beard and the hat of Karataš sculpture is very similar to the statue of Jupiter Dolichenus from Brza Palanka, while the modelling of god's hair in Karataš sculpture is analogous to the hair of deity's statue from Viminacium. By its stylistic characteristics, the head of Jupiter Dolichenus from Karataš, Diana has its analogy in the sculpture of Jupiter Dolichenus from Slankamen, Acumincum (now in Kunsthistorisches Museum in Wien) and the sculpture of the god from Carnuntum.[976] It can be presumed that, similar to its analogies, the sculpture of Jupiter Dolichenus from Karataš, Diana, represented the god standing on the bull's back, with his usual attributes of thunderbolt and double headed axe in his hands or that perhaps, the sculpture was a part of a composition of Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena. The sculpture of Jupiter Dolichenus from Karataš, Diana can be dated to the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century.

[969] Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 175-176, fig. 8; Zotović 1966: 93, E.
[970] Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 96, num. 39.
[971] Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 175-176, num. 4, fig. 7; Zotović 1966: 92-93, 35D, Pl. IX. 2.
[972] Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 173, num. 1, fig. 4; Zotović 1966: 89-90, 35A.
[973] Merlat 1951: 120, num. 143.
[974] Вулић 1941-48: 93, num. 201; Tomović 1993: 108, num. 143, fig. 42.2.
[975] Popović, Borić-Brešković 2013: 309.
[976] The marble sculpture of Jupiter Dolichenus from Stari Slankamen, Acumincum is also dated to the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century, as the sculpture from Karataš, Diana, *CCID* 151, 138, num. 207, Taf. XLI and num. 230, Taf. XLII.

As I have already mentioned, two triangular votive plates are known from the territory of the Central Balkans, discovered at the localities of Jasen (Romulianum) and Brza Palanka. In the locality of Jasen, the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus is also attested by two previously mentioned bronze finds of *tabella ansata*. A bronze triangular votive plate was also found inside the same Roman castrum as the two bronze *tabellae ansatae*, where a terracotta statue of an eagle (in P. Merlat's opinion, the eagle of Jupiter Dolichenus) was discovered too.[977] The triangular votive plate from Jasen (cat. 29) was found in a fragmented state, since the top of the plate is missing.[978] Like other known examples, it is divided into two registers: in the upper register, figures of Jupiter Dolichenus standing on a bull and Juno Dolichena standing on a hind's back are shown. The two deities are turned towards each other and presented in the usual canonical way – Jupiter Dolichenus is shown as a bearded, mature man dressed in a short tunica with a cuirass, holding a double headed axe and a thunderbolt in his hands, while Juno Dolichena is dressed in a long chiton, with a mirror and a sceptre in her hands. A large crown is presented beside their heads, substituting the goddess Victoria. In the lower register, three male figures are presented in the act of a libation and it can be presumed that the person who is performing the libation is a priest, while the two other persons could be Castors.[979] Both of the the god's acolytes hold the same attributes as the deity – a double headed axe and a thunderbolt. The base of the lower register is ornamented with the motif of a bucrania. Beside the priest, two cult standards are presented. Although the top of the Jasen votive plate is missing, in P. Merlat's opinion, it probably contained the usually presented busts of Sol and Luna with an eagle or, perhaps, an image of fire above the deities' busts.[980] However, M. Hörig and E. Schwertheim oppose P. Merlat's opinion, stating that there was not enough space in the register for images of Sol and Luna's busts and the figure of an eagle.[981] There is an undeniable similarity between the iconography of the Jasen triangular votive plate and the iconography presented on a fresco from the temple in Dura Europos.[982] The stylistic characteristics of the triangular votive plate from Jasen suggest that it was made at the end of the 2nd century or in the period of the first four decades of the 3rd century.[983]

Another triangle votive plate is known from the territory of the Roman Central Balkans, however it, unfortunately, did not draw the attention of scholars in the past and, except in P. Pop Lazić's article and N. Gudea's article about triangle votive plates, it has not been mentioned in scholarly literature. Since the triangular votive plate from Brza Palanka (cat. 28) was presented in earlier literature only in catalogue form, I think that it should be properly introduced here, with a concise description, analysis and interpretation, which would contribute to a better understanding of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult and theology.[984] The triangular votive plate in question was bought by the Historical Museum of Serbia in 1979, from a private collector. It was published by P. Pop-Lazić, who wrote that the object was found in a field near the location where the *sacrarium* in Brza Palanka was found.[985]From conversations with locals, the author noted military trenches from both World Wars that were dug in the vicinity of the *sacrarium* and realised that probably during the digging of the trenches, the votive plate happened to be in discarded soil put on another part of the field. Consequently, it was not found among other cult objects from Brza Palanka's *sacrarium* during the archaeological excavations of 1962, but was discovered some 10 years later, during agricultural works on that part of the field. This hypothesis is additionally supported by the fact that among cult objects from the sacrarium, there was a bronze holder for triangular votive plates, with the inscription *Aurelius Gaius Centurio Chorortis I Cretum* and two identical bronze statuettes of an eagle with half-stretched wings.[986] Therefore, it is not difficult to conclude that the signum and the plate belonged together, both being placed in Brza Palanka's *sacrarium*.

The triangular votive plate is made of gilded bronze foil, with the iconography on the obverse made using techniques of embossing, punctuation and chiselling. It is damaged in the middle and in the lower part and the ruts present on both sides imply that the plate was fixed on a wooden or metal base. It is visually divided

[977] Merlat 1951: 50, num. 51.
[978] Merlat 1951: 45-50, num. 50, T. III 2; *CCID* 80-82, num. 103, T. XXVI.
[979] Ibid.
[980] Similar to the top register from Komlod triangular votive plate, Merlat 1951: 59-64, num. 65, Pl. IV, 2.
[981] *CCID*: 82.
[982] Merlat 1951: 46, ft. 5.
[983] Ibid: 50; *CCID*: 82

[984] For a more detailed description and analysis of the triangular votive plate from Brza Palanka' sacrarium see Гавриловић Витас 2019: 189-206.
[985] Archaeological excavations on the locality Brza Palanka, Egeta in 1962. year, led to the discovery of a room, 3,5x3,8m, orientated N-S, with the entrance on the northern side. It was built from stone and pebbles with bricks, with a painted interior. The entrance to the room is damaged by military rows dug in 1915. year. The interior walls were decorated with stucco of yellowish colour and on the mortar floor of the structure, with grindstone and layer of red mortar above it, numerous fragments of roof tiles *tegulae* were found. In the middle of the room, a big stone block in the shape of an irregular parallelepiped was discovered, with four oval symmetrically positioned holes in one half of its' upper side. Four bronze coins of emperor Geta and one silver denarius of Emperor Elagabalus, were found near the stone block. All votive objects connected to the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, were found aligned by the interior wall of the structure, while only a fragment of a marble sculpture (marble head of Jupiter Dolichenus) was discovered in the northern part of the structure's interior, Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 173-182.
[986] Two identical bronze statuettes of an eagle (heights 5,5 cm) probably constituted a whole with a signum and a triangular votive plate from Brza Palanka, Gavrilović Vitas 2020a: 204-223.

into three registers:[987] on the top register there is an eagle with a wreath in its beak,[988] under which busts of Sol and Luna are presented, turned towards each other. Between the two busts, motifs of a sword (beside Luna's bust) and a flagellum (beside Sol's bust) are shown. In the central register, a standing figure of Jupiter Dolichenus, frontally presented, is shown, holding a double headed axe in his right raised hand and a thunderbolt in his left hand. The god is presented in his usual way, as a mature, bearded man, with a Phrygian hat, dressed in a tunic, with a cuirass over it, and with a paludamentum on his shoulders. Beside his left shoulder, a large signum is shown with six discs and an open hand on the top. Two figures of mature, bearded men, the god's acolytes *Castores Dolicheni*, are presented at the level of the god's waistline. Both of them are shown in profile, dressed in armour with a paludamentum, standing in a biga pulled by two bulls, with their backs turned to each other. They differ only in the different attributes in their hands – the Castor on the left side is holding ears of wheat, while the Castor on the right side is holding an oval object (sun-disc?) in his right hand and also ears of wheat. An altar is presented between the legs of Jupiter Dolichenus, while in the lower register, the head of a mature, bearded figure with a bipennis and thunderbolt is shown. Since the whole lower part of the plate is missing, it can only be presumed that there was a figure of Jupiter Dolichenus standing on a bull in its central zone, while in the left lower corner, another figure of the god was presented.

As in almost all known triangular votive plates, the iconography on the Brza Palanka plate is presented on the obverse, however there are examples with the iconography on both sides of the plate.[989] As can be observed from its iconography, on the votive plate from Brza Palanka the iconographic canon of presenting three basic spheres is respected. In the lowest register, the mundane sphere with the Castors is shown, in the central zone the god Jupiter Dolichenus in its divine sphere and in the top register celestial symbols, divided one from the other by ornament of astragals, as in the votive plate from Komlod. The busts of Sol and Luna stand for cosmic order and symbolise the guarantors of cosmic harmony.[990] While the figures of the Castors are shown clothed as Romans, the central figure of Jupiter Dolichenus is presented with a certain Oriental influence visible in the figures of bulls and in the identical view of the Castors holding plants in their hands, which mirrors Iron Age iconography of Dolichenus' acolytes.[991] An interesting iconographic detail is presented in the image of a signum, a spear decorated with six discs (phalerae),[992] on top of which an open hand with raised fingers is presented. The motif of the signum is attested on triangular votive plates of Jupiter Dolichenus only on the plates from Jasen and Komlod, and two plates from Mauer-an-der-Url. The detail of an open hand with raised fingers on the signum's top is known only from the plate found in Mauer-an-der-Url, while on three remaining plates, a figure of an eagle is shown on the top of the signum.[993] As I have already mentioned, there was a great likeness between Roman military and cult standards from the East and L. Dirven thinks that following the Roman conquest of Syria, the two kinds of signa were assimilated, in the context of the Syrian adaptation of their standards to Roman standards. The signa represented on the monuments of Jupiter Dolichenus are very like the so-called centurial, manipular standards, which could be decorated with motifs of an open hand, discs, heraldic symbols and a figure of the goddess Victoria.[994] However, on no cult signum from Syria and Asia Minor is the motif of an open hand with raised fingers known, which was typical for the Jupiter Dolichenus cult. Therefore, it is my opinion that the presentations of the signa in the god's triangular votive plates have a cult rather than military content. Two details would support such a hypothesis; the presentation on a votive altar dedicated to Jupiter and Terra Mater from the locality of Pecs (Sopianae), which shows the goddess holding a signum with a triangular votive plate, and a similar presentation known from Elagabalus' coins from Aquincum, where the emperor is sacrificing above an altar flanked by two signa, of which one has a triangular votive plate on its top.[995] Another interesting detail in Brza Palanka's triangular votive plate is that a signum is not represented on the ground, as in other known plates, but floating in the air, behind the god's shoulder. Since it is presented in

[987] Triangular votive plates differ mutually also by the registers into which they are divided – the simplest forms of plates are known from *dolichenum* on Dülük Baba Tepesi in Doliche and are presented by finds with no division of the iconography into registers or with a division on two registers or three registers (examples from Traismauer (Trigisamum) and Hedderheim (Nida) or five registers (plates from Kolod and Mauer-an-der-Url).

[988] The image of an eagle with a wreath in his beak is known from triangular votive plates found in Komlod, Traismauer, Mauer-an-der-Url and Turda (Potaissa), Merlat 1951: pl. IV, fig. 3; pl. XII, fig. 1; pl. XIII; pl. XIV; pl. II, 1.

[989] Triangular votive plates from localities Turda and Mauer-an-der-Url, *CCID* 98-99, num. 142, 181-191.

[990] Different opinions exist in scholarly literature about the symbolism of Sol's and Luna's busts presented on reliefs, mosaics, paintings, sarcophagi and votive plates. It has been suggested that on sarcophagi, the pair indicates the time (day or night) in the main scene, which S. Hijmans finds quite doubtful. Other authors presume that images of Sol and Luna represent cosmic order, while S. Hijmans suggests that like the Phoenix, they refer to the ebb and flow, the constant death and renewal, period of darkness followed by the period of light, Hijmans 1996: 142-143.

[991] These elements are known from the presentations of local gods like Baal of Doliche, which date from the Iron Age period, Erdil-Kocaman and Ogut 2011: 511–520; Bunnens 2004: 57–81; Blömer, Facella 2017: 109-110.

[992] In military *signa*, a number of discs signified the number of military decorations given to army units for their bravery, Dirven 2005: 125.

[993] Speidel 1978: 57.

[994] Hebblewhite 2003–2004: 77.

[995] Merlat 1960: 172-173.

the central register, which is the divine zone, it can be presumed that, perhaps, it represents a substitute of a certain deity closely connected to Jupiter Dolichenus' cult, such as Juno Dolichena. Analysis of the stylistic characteristics of the votive plate from Brza Palanka indicates very skilful work with a visible Oriental influence, which is particularly mirrored in the details of Jupiter Dolichenus' and the Castors' figures. Iconographically, the closest analogies are found in the triangular votive plate from Mauer-an-der-Url and the plate from Komlod.[996] I would suggest that the votive plate from Brza Palanka's *sacrarium*, due to the very rich and skilfully modelled iconography, represents a possibly imported work from some larger military centre like, for example, Mauer-an-der-Url, probably done by an artisan of Oriental origin. The other, less possible option, would be that it was produced in some of the major urban Central Balkan localities. The majority of triangular votive plates are dated to the first half of the 3rd century, but judging by the context of all the cult objects found in Brza Palanka's sacrarium, I would propose a more precise chronological frame for the votive plate's dating; from the beginning of the 3rd century to 235.

A bronze statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus from Surduk (Ritium) is so far the only known example of this kind from the Central Balkans territory. (cat. 30).[997] The fragmented statuette represents a mature, bearded man who stands, dressed in a short tunic with a cloak over his arms. He has a Phrygian hat on his head, whose ends fall on the deity's back. His face is surrounded with curly hair and a short beard, while the details of his face are very carefully modelled. Since both attributes are missing from the god's hands, it can only be presumed that he held a bipennis in his left, raised hand, while in his right hand a thunderbolt was presented. The bronze statuette from Surduk represents a solid local work, which indicates a good knowledge of the god's iconography, as was the case with the statues from St. Germain or the Dacian locality of Ilisua.[998] However, the closest iconographic analogy to the statuette from Surduk can be found in the statue from the locality of Desa, because of the similarities in the facial features, the way the hair is modelled and the treatment of the clothes.[999] Certain similarities also exist in the bronze statuette found in the locality of Mauer-an-der-Url, as with a marble statuette of the god from the locality of Izgrev in the Varna district.[1000] The stylistic characteristics imply the period of the second half of the 2nd century as the time when the Surduk statuette was produced.

A bronze appliqué in the shape of Jupiter Dolichenus' bust was found in the locality of Leskovac (cat. 33).[1001] The bust represents a canonical image of the god, as a mature, bearded man with a Phrygian hat, with curly hair falling on his shoulders. The facial features are modelled with incisions, while his eyes are represented plastically. The appliqué represents the ornament of a jug, being local work of mediocre quality, probably dating to the beginning of the 3rd century.

A pendant in the shape of a double headed axe was discovered in the locality of Singidunum and, as a characteristic symbol of Jupiter Dolichenus, it can be presumed that it was worn as an apotropaic amulet (cat. 31).[1002] The axe has a hole in the middle, like similar finds from all over the Roman Empire.[1003] Small bronze objects like those in the shape of an axe could have been worn as pendants, but also as amulets. Double headed axe pendants and amulets were worn by soldiers as a symbol of Jupiter Dolichenus, which brought them luck and success in military combat, assuring victory over the enemy.[1004] The Singidunum pendant can be dated only approximately, to the period of the 3rd century.

Although they do not represent cult objects of Jupiter Dolichenus, only the parts of them, I think it is important to mention two bronze holders for bronze triangular plates from the Central Balkans. The first bronze holder for the god's signum was discovered in Brza Palanka's *sacrarium* and, during its conservation, it was discovered that it contains an inscription with the name Aurelius Gaius, a centurion of the Cohors I Cretum.[1005] The holder is attached to a pole with stylised snakes on both sides and is dated to the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century.[1006]

A second holder for a signum was discovered during archaeological excavations in the locality of Niševac,

[996] It is interesting that the dedicant of a triangular votive plate from Komlod, Publius Aelius Lucilius, was also a centurion of cohors (cohors I Alpinorum), as Aurelius Gaius was from cohors I Cretum from Brza Palanka, *CCID* 131-133, num. 201.

[997] Antička bronza u Jugoslaviji 1969: 99, num. 125; Tadin 1979: 29, num. 56, fig. 54; Античка бронза Сингидунума 1997: 39, num. 28.

[998] Merlat 1951: Pl. XXVII, 2; Popa, Berciu 1978: 23, num. 21, VIII, 1.

[999] Vollkommer 1992: 475, num. 36.

[1000] Merlat 1951: 127, num. 149, Pl. XII, 2; Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 220, num. 4, Pl. LXXI, LXXII

[1001] Stamenković 2013: cat. 122.2, fig. 98.

[1002] Античка бронза Сингидунума 1997: 81, num. 94.

[1003] M. Green analyzing the pendants and amulets in the shape of an axe from Roman Britain, implicates on different possibilities of the interpretation of finds of this kind. Therefore, for a pendant found in the locality South Shields, similar to our find from Singidunum, she presumes that it could be worn as a pendant and as an amulet. M. Green believes that the pendants and amulets in the shape of an axe are connected to Roman-Celtic beliefs in god Jupiter, equated with the Celtic god of the sky. In her discussion of the finds from southern Britannia, the author mentions that some of the examples were found inside the temples or graves, carrying chthonian or soteriological dimension, Green 1981: 256, 258.

[1004] Античка бронза Сингидунума 1997: 62, 81, num. 94; Ružić 2006: 278, num. 367.

[1005] Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 177.

[1006] Similar holders were found in *dolichenum* in Brigetio and god's temple in Vetus Salina in Pannonia Inferior, Merlat 1951, 93, num. 98; Banki 1981: 120, Taf. II.

near Svrljig, the presumed location of Timacum Maius, in 2010, where the Cohors I Cretum was stationed before transferring to Brza Palanka.[1007] The signum had traces of fire damage, one of its two finials is missing and the ends of its straps terminate triangularly, reminiscent of snake heads. It is dated to the first half of the 2nd century or, perhaps, earlier.

Both bronze holders from Brza Palanka's sacrarium and Niševac belong to the so-called classical type of holders, which number a total of 22 finds from Europe and the Near East.[1008] The connection between the two holders for Jupiter Dolichenus' triangular votive plates in the context of the Cohors I Cretum and its presence in both localities cannot be disregarded, particularly since the Cohors was in Niševac before being transferred to Brza Palanka, where the whole Cohors dedicated a *tabella ansata* to the god and one of the soldiers was probably a dedicant of a triangular votive plate from Brza Palanka's *sacrarium*, because on a signum holder found with other cult objects in a shrine, the name of a soldier of the Cohors I Cretum is inscribed.[1009]

The last find connected to the cult of the god Jupiter Dolichenus in the Central Balkan Roman provinces is a terracotta found in the locality of Viminacium (cat. 32).[1010] This is a representation of a bearded man with a Phrygian hat, who was probably standing on a bull's back with the usual attributes in his hands, although only the head of deity was found during archaeological excavations. The well modelled curly hair that surrounds the face of the god, with clearly presented facial details, imply the work of a local artisan. The terracotta of Jupiter Dolichenus was found together with nine more fragmented anthropomorphic terracottas, in the sacrificial horizon of the 'Više grobalja' necropolis in Viminacium and it can be dated either to the 2nd or the 3rd century.

4.3. The Cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Central Balkans

Among the cults of all Asia Minor deities confirmed in the Roman Central Balkans, the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus is acknowledged with the greatest number of epigraphic monuments – as many as 17. When analysing archaeological material connected to the god's cult, the only kind of his cult objects that is not known thus far are votive hands of Jupiter Dolichenus. The mapping of Jupiter Dolichenus' epigraphic and archaeological monuments in the Central Balkans territory shows that the majority of finds were constated in the Danube Limes area, in Roman fortifications, or in its hinterland – only three inscriptions were found in the interior of the territory. This situation is not only typical for Central Balkan Roman provinces, it is also known from the territory of the Rhine Limes.[1011] Due to the considerable number of epigraphic monuments with certain elements in the inscriptions that, in most cases imply either the dedicant's origin or profession or the reason for erecting the monument, a somewhat clearer picture about the worshippers of the god in the Central Balkans can be reconstructed than in cases of other Asia Minor and Syrian cults. The fact that in large urban centres like Arčar and in the locations of Roman fortifications like Čezava and Brza Palanka, epigraphic monuments and several different kinds of archaeological monuments have been discovered, implies that the army had a leading role in the spread and support of the cult as the priests whose names are confirmed on several Central Balkan monuments. On most of the monuments, the god's name is written in the correct form, while on some monuments (from Arčar, Jasen and Veliko Gradište), an incorrect vulgar Latin form of his epithet is used (Dolicenus, Dulcenus and Dolicinus). Although some authors tried to explain the vulgarisation of the correct form of the god's epithet of Dolichenus as possible originals of the epithet, new research has show that the vulgarisation of deity's epithet can be attributed to dedicants of indigenous origin.[1012] Where it was possible to know the reason for the erection of the monument to Jupiter Dolichenus, it was established that the reasons for the dedications were either the health and well-being of the dedicant and his family or the emperor's health and well-being. Only in the case of the votive altar from Arčar, as in the case of *tabella ansata* from Jasen, the reason for dedication was the god's command. The analysis of

[1007] The bronze holder for signum from Timacum Maius was found in a building with hypocaust consisting of two rooms explored during the archaeological campaign in 2010. year. The building is dated to the first half of the 2nd century, but the researchers presume that it was in use in the earlier period, Petrović, Filipović 2016: 26.

[1008] Ibid: 27-28.

[1009] Cohors I Cretum was formed in pre-Flavian period and (beside Cohors I Cilicum) was the part of the so-far known, oldest military units located in Naissus (Cohors I Cretum is confirmed as Moesia cohort on a military diploma from 78, *IMS* IV: 34; Mirković 2015: 42–43. It was located in Moesia Superior in the period of the preparations for Trajan's Dacian wars (confirmed by military diplomas from 93 and 100), Mirković 1968: 115. A considerable number of bricks from Banatska Palanka wears the stamps of military units which participated in Trajan's Dacian wars, among them the name of cohors I Cretum is also encountered, Mirković 2015: 71; Marcu 2004: 582–583. It is also recorded on the military diplomas from Moesia Inferior in 94 and 96 and in Dacia in 110 and 114, Marcu 2004: 583. After a temporary stay in Dacia, the cohort returned to the territory of the province Moesia Superior (confirmed on a military diploma from 159/160), where it stayed in Brza Palanka, Egeta, during the 2nd and 3rd century.

[1010] Зотовић, Јордовић 1990: 28.

[1011] However, the areas of Danube and Rhine limes aren't the only territories where the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus is attested with numerous monuments – a large number of finds was constated in the interior of province Dacia, more than 40 archaeological and epigraphical monuments, explained by the presence of a significant number of Asia Minor and Syrian soldiers, merchants, craftsmen, freedmen etc., Popa, Berciu 1978: 49-65.

[1012] Vágási 2019: 537-546.

dedicants' names, professions and social status shows very diverse picture of Jupiter Dolichenus' adherents in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans. The spectrum encompasses a governor of Moesia Superior (Lucius Marius Perpetuus, from the votive altar found in Karataš, Diana), priests, soldiers, military personnel, a Cohors, but also an imperial slave. A similar situation, in the context of diverse professions and social class among the deity's dedicants, can be observed in Dacia – from a total of 30 epigraphic monuments, one dedication is made by the procurator of Dacia Porolisensi (a certain Aelius Lycinius), three monuments are erected by decurions of colonia Aurelia Apulensis and colonia Napoca, one dedication is placed by the commander of the Cohors V Gallorum, ten dedications belong to soldiers, while other monuments are erected by Jupiter Dolichenus' priests, Syrian merchants and slaves.[1013] However, among Central Balkan monuments dedicated to the god by soldiers, only on three monuments can it be stated with certainty that the person who erected the monument was active in military service. Can then, the conclusion offered in earlier literature,[1014] that Jupiter Dolichenus was primarily a military god in the Central Balkans, be sustained by epigraphic and archaeological material? In her analysis of epigraphic and archaeological monuments from Moesia Superior, Lj. Zotović differentiated four kinds of the god's monuments, ascribing the spread of the cult to the Roman army and the process of Romanisation.[1015] The author relates the appearance and sudden spread of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult in the Central Balkans to a visit by Septimius Severus to Pannonian military camps in 202.[1016] The unstable situation in the Central Balkans caused by Marcomannic and Sarmatian campaigns in the second half of the 2nd century, created certainly very hard times for the Roman Empire and the indigenous populations, but also for the army. We can, therefore, see the reason for their need to have and to pray to a supreme military god, as Jupiter Dolichenus was. What additionally convinced Lj. Zotović that Jupiter Dolichenus was a god of a primarily military character in the Central Balkans was the absence of any epithets with the god's name that would indicate a certain dimension under which he was venerated beside being *deus militaris*, but also the canonical style of his representations discovered in the mentioned territory.[1017] Reviewing the opinions and conclusions of Lj. Zotović regarding the sudden spread of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult, we cannot argue with the fact that the majority of epigraphic and archaeological monuments date to the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century. However, only one monument, a votive altar of Lucius Marius Perpetuus, from Karataš (Diana) on the Danube limes, can be perhaps linked to the presumed visit of Caracalla to the Roman fortification. It seems that some other circumstances should be taken into consideration, like the confirmation of the presence of Ουαρνι χορα Δολιχεον, that is, a community of immigrants from Jupiter Dolichenus' homeland, from the lost epigraphic monument discovered in Viminacium, whose dedicant was an immigrant.[1018] The fact that only on three Central Balkan monuments the dedicants were certainly soldiers, that is, in military service, as A. Collar proved, does not have to mean that on all the others monuments that do not contain data about the dedicant's profession, the dedicants were not soldiers or, in some way, connected to the army.[1019] Although on more than half the dedications from the Central Balkan Roman provinces, the dedicants are of unknown profession, we can't know if some of them weren't in some way related to the army. Another argument in favour of the previously mentioned hypothesis is the fact that the majority of the god's epigraphic and archaeological monuments were found in or near Roman military camps. Whether or not the dedicants of all these monuments were in active service is debatable, because the most frequent consecrative formula (*pro salute imperatoris*) could have been placed not only by soldiers, but also by other persons active in the army or related to it in some way. Epigraphic and archaeological material connected to Jupiter Dolichenus' cult in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans also supports another hypothesis put forward in recent literature. Since the earliest epigraphic monuments from North Africa, Pannonia, Britannia and Dacia were dedicated by soldiers (centurions, prefects of Cohors, beneficiarii consularis, etc.), it is probable that men of authority within the army were

[1013] Popa, Berciu 1978: 50-53.

[1014] I am alluding to Lj. Zotović monography about Oriental cults in Moesia Superior (Les cultes orientaux sur le territoire de la Mésie Superieure), published in 1966. year, where the author concluded that Jupiter Dolichenus was primarily military god and from then on, this conclusion was taken over in later literature, without taking into account new finds or the needed revision of earlier discovered epigraphical and archaeological monuments.

[1015] In her analysis, Lj. Zotović is discussing all Jupiter Dolichenus' monuments from the territory of ex-Yugoslavia, differing: monuments that were discovered solely in important Roman fortifications in Danube limes (these monuments form first and the second group of Dolichenus' monuments), monuments found in the vicinity of big urban centres (third group of monuments) and monuments discovered out of the Central Balkans' territory (the fourth group of monuments), Zotović 1964: 29-52.

[1016] Lj. Zotović believes that during Septimius Severus' reign, Semitic cults and particularly the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, were fully supported. Also, during the emperor's reign, many Orientals were in active service in the army and in administrative service, which further helped the spreading of the cult in the territory of Roman Central Balkans, Ibid: 53.

[1017] Lj. Zotović is alluding to the epithets like aeternus, conservator, exuperantissimus and praestantissimus, which aren't confirmed on any of known Dolichenus monuments from Central Balkans, Ibid: 55.

[1018] Bošković-Robert 2006: 232-233. For the monument see Вулић 1903: 85, num. 2.

[1019] As A. Collar points out dedications with no data about a military connection number more than half (257) out of 430 dedications. The author emphasises that, however, many of the dedications are from someone who was in some way connected to the military – as partners or families, Collar 2013: 95.

responsible for the spread of the cult at a certain time in the Central Balkans as well, primarily in those centres that were of military significance.[1020] In that context, the theory of A. Collar, that the activation of the already established military network was the reason for the sudden spread and popularity of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult in the Central Balkans after 160, finds its arguments in epigraphic and archaeological monuments, of which the majority are dated to the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Bearing in mind that the monuments were discovered in, for example, Arčar (which became a colony during Trajan's reign) and in the Danube Limes localities where Roman fortifications were formed before and during Trajan's wars with the Dacians, it is clear that a military network established in the Central Balkans already existed before 160 and that Jupiter Dolichenus' cult could have been spread further through it. Of course, this does not mean that the role of other Jupiter Dolichenus adherents who were merchants, artisans, freedman of Asia Minor or Syrian origin in spreading of god's cult was insignificant, but in the Central Balkans the role of one other group of the god's devotees must be mentioned, because of its significance and that is of the god's Oriental priests. Among 86 priests known from epigraphic and archaeological material,[1021] at least nine priests are attested on Central Balkans' monuments. I say at least nine, because on the votive altar from Karataš the number of priests is not stated, but we know there were more than one (implied by the term *sacerdotes*). To the mentioned number of monuments, I will also add the funerary monument from the Danube Limes locality of Glamija, in the village of Rtkovo, dedicated to Manes in memory of Iulius Appolinaris, a priest of Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria, who will be discussed in the chapter about the Syrian goddess. The names of the priests imply their Oriental origin, while two monuments found inside a Roman castra (Arčar and Jasen), raise the question as to whether the priests were, perhaps, in active military service. From known examples, like for example, a relief with representations of Apollo and Artemis with the dedicant Ulpius Chresimus, from Rome and a votive altar from Carnuntum, we know that the priests of Jupiter Dolichenus could have been in active service.[1022] Although A. Collar states that the hypothesis that where more priests are confirmed, the god's cult was more popular does not hold true in the provinces of Britannia and Germania, it does so in the Roman Central Balkan provinces. Jupiter Dolichenus' priests who served in the army as well or were travelling or spending a certain period of time in a particular centre, spread the cult of the god and also trained persons who were not of Oriental origin as candidates for the priesthood.

Under which aspects was Jupiter Dolichenus venerated in the territory of the Central Balkans Roman provinces? His primary dimension as a war god and a victorious deity is undisputable, but not only in the context of battles and victory over an enemy, but also in the context of triumph in other spheres of life. As *κυριω,* he is the master of the destinies of his worshippers, who entrust their lives in his hands, letting him influence their lives. He was also a protector, a guarantor of stability, a god of fertility and an iatric deity.[1023] The god's solar and celestial aspects must not be forgotten, inscriptions confirm that he represented a guardian and a symbol of eternal life (*Dolicheni Aeterni Conservatori totius poli*).[1024] Also, the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus is confirmed in the mining districts of the Central Balkans, where he could have been venerated as a protector of mines and miners. This aspect of Jupiter Dolichenus is known from the neighbouring area of the province of Dalmatia, where a votive altar found in Majdanište, in the village of Maslovar, was dedicated to the god by, presumably, his priest, who was originally from Syria, like other immigrants settled in the valley of the river Japra, who worked in the mines in the district.[1025] A

[1020] The earliest epigraphic monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus are known from Rome (?), Lambaesis, Carnuntum, Balaclava, Voreda (Old Penrith), Vindolanda and from the forts on Hadian's Wall in Roman Britain, Praetorium Latobicorum in Pannonia Superior, and Pojejena de Sus in Dacia and dedicants are mostly military persons, Collar 2013: 99-102.

[1021] Ibid: 139-140.

[1022] On relief presentation of Apollo with lyre and laurel wreath and Diana Lucifera holding a torch, dated between 161 and 166, the inscription mentions Marcus Ulpius Chresimus who was Jupiter Dolichenus sacerdos, but also a horseman in the emperor's cavalry guard, Speidel 1978: 12-14. Votive monument from Carnuntum, dated in the first half of the 3rd century is dedicated by Ulpius Amandianus, who is a candidate for the priesthood of Jupiter Dolichenus, but also an active soldier, Ibid: 48-49.

[1023] Votive monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus *ex iussu* are usually in connection with certain cult practice (renewing of a vow, restoration of his shrine or temple, the building of a sanctuary etc.). At the same time, the god gave oracles, which is known from plaques with Greek or Latin alphabet, which were probably used for composing prophecies by bringing together letters pointed by a blindfolded priest: Turcan 1996: 168.

[1024] The inscription from a marble slab discovered in *dolichenum* on Aventine hill in Rome, dated from 212 to 250, *CIL* VI, 406.

[1025] The votive altar was found in 1962. year in Majdanište in village Maslovar on the bank of Japra river. On the upper part of the monument, an eagle with outstretched wings is presented, with the first part of the inscription under it. In the centre of the front side, two male standing figures are shown, dressed in tunicae with long sleeves, wearing tiarae and holding two double headed axes and stylized palm branches in their hands. V. Paškvalin interpreted them as the images of Jupiter Dolichenus and Castor and he reads the inscription: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) et Cas|to|(ri) | M(arcus) Aur(elius) Flav(u)s s(acerdos) I(ovis) |O(ptimi) | M(aximi) D(olicheni) v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) l(aetus) m(erito).* The author presumes that Marcus Aurelius Flavius, Jupiter Dolichenus' priest, was of Oriental origin and since other Oriental names have been confirmed in epigraphic monuments discovered in Japra valley, V. Paškvalin suggests that Oriental immigrants were employed in the mines and belonged to the private association which venerated Dolichenian god as a protector of mines and miners, Paškvalin 1970: 19-29. However, J. Medini doesn't agree with V. Paškvalin's interpretation of the monument's iconography and reading. Analysing the posture and attributes of presented figures, J. Medini argues that in Majdanište monument, Dolichenus' accolytes *Castores* are presented and that therefore, instead of *Castori*, that part of the inscription should be read as

votive altar from Prizren, dedicated to Asclepius and Genius Dolicheni, could imply an iatric dimension of the god, but also his dimension as a homeland deity, because of the epitet paternus (*paternus deus*).[1026] Of course, here an analogy in the context of the aspect under which Jupiter Dolichenus was venerated, can be drawn with a lost altar, probably from Apulum, also dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus and Asclepius, who was one of the most prominent gods in Apulum and Sarmizetetusa. Asclepius was favoured by worshippers of different professions and social status and erecting a mutual dedication to him and some other god suggests creating equivalence between that particular god and the already familiar and favoured god Asclepius.[1027] On the basis of the Apulum monument and numerous Apollo monuments within the *dolichena* in Dacia, C. Szabó suggests that, in the late 2nd century, Jupiter Dolichenus was venerated as an iatric god as well in the province, particularly favoured among soldiers. The association of Jupiter Dolichenus with Asclepius is confirmed in the *dolichenum* on the Aventine as well, where the god presumably specialised in different medical fields from Asclepius. However, it is possible that this syncretism between the two gods was directed towards a better incorporation and further spread of the new Dolichenus cult in the environments where other deities were already well known and favoured, which is a usual occurrence in the Central Balkans territory, where syncretism between 'old' and 'new' cults is known and attested. Iatric deities, Asclepius and Hygieia, enjoyed popularity in central and southern parts of the Balkans, therefore, it is also possible that in the votive monument from Prizren, the genius Dolicheni was associated with Asclepius as part of a social pattern and that Jupiter Dolichenus was venerated as a deity with a healing dimension.

I would not agree with conclusions known from earlier literature that 'equitation between Jupiter Dolichenus and Jupiter Optimus Maximus must not be comprehended as proof of Jupiter Dolichenus' supreme and omnipotent power, but only as a designation of him as a supreme military god'.[1028] Whether it was soldiers or civilians who worshipped Jupiter Dolichenus, Central Balkan monuments show that the god was venerated under different aspects, depending on the dedicant's origin and profession, but at the same time it is clear that the Dolichenian god was always comprehended as a deity who was omnipotent and could offer complete protection and hope in success and victory of any kind. The god shared certain features with the Roman emperor, epigraphically and iconographically – epigraphically, as *conservator orbis terrarum* and *conservator totius mundi,* Jupiter Dolichenus was a symbol of order and preserver of the imperial order. Iconographically, the god was dressed in the military dress of the Roman emperor, sometimes wearing a wreath, which only emphasised the association of the god and the ruler of the Roman Empire and symbolised the god's power and victorious dimension.[1029]

In hitherto known sculptural and statuary finds presenting Jupiter Dolichenus or the god with his paredra, Juno Dolichena, they do represent the canonical image of the deity or of the divine couple. Some of the sculptural representations, such as the statue from Ravna, Timacum Minus, are modelled in high quality marble and display the iconography of the god with knowledge and skill. The best example is the head of Jupiter Dolichenus discovered in Karataš, Diana, where the god is crowned with a laurel wreath and a medallion, in the same manner as Roman emperor. Of course, another hypothesis is possible, that a sculpture from Karataš presents the god's priest, similar to known presentations of Syrian priests shown with a conical cap and wreath, like the life-size portrait of a priest from the Dallas Museum of Arts.[1030] However if Jupiter Dolichenus is presented, he is thus shown with imperial features, which underline his dimension of victorious god and the deity who takes care of the universal order, *conservator totius mundi.* I would not agree with the opinion offered by Lj. Zotović that the absence of certain iconographic elements in Central Balkan presentations of Jupiter Dolichenus implies only one, military, aspect of the god. The representation of a canonical image of the god does not necessarily mean that his one and only cult dimension was shown. In that context, I am inclined to think that some statuary representations carry certain allusions to the celestial and solar aspect of Jupiter Dolichenus, like, for example, the fragmented statue of the god from Brza Palanka's *sacrarium*, where, between the bull's belly and the base of the statue, an eagle with spread wings is presented. Two figures of eagles are presented in another statuary composition from the Brza Palanka shrine – one between the bull's horns and the other beside the god's left leg. The image of an eagle, of course, as a symbol of god, underlines all his characteristics, but also symbolises Jupiter Dolichenus as a celestial deity who rules the Earth and sky.

Castoribus, Medini 1982: 61-86.

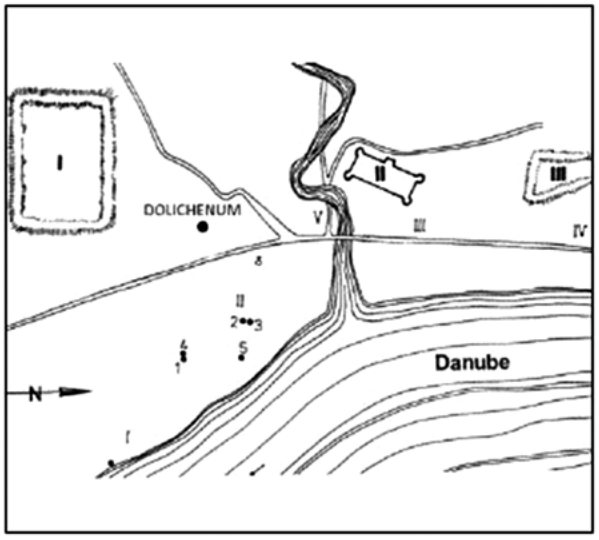
[1026] Zotović 1964: 50.

[1027] The votive altar probably from Apulum where *dolichenum* is epigraphically attested, reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) / ex praecepto / num(inis) Aesculapi(i) / somno monit(us) / Veturius Marci/ an(us) ve(teranus) l(egionis) XIII G(eminae) p(ro) s(alute) s(ua) suor(um) q(ue)*, Dészpa 2017: 149-150; Szabó 2018: 75.

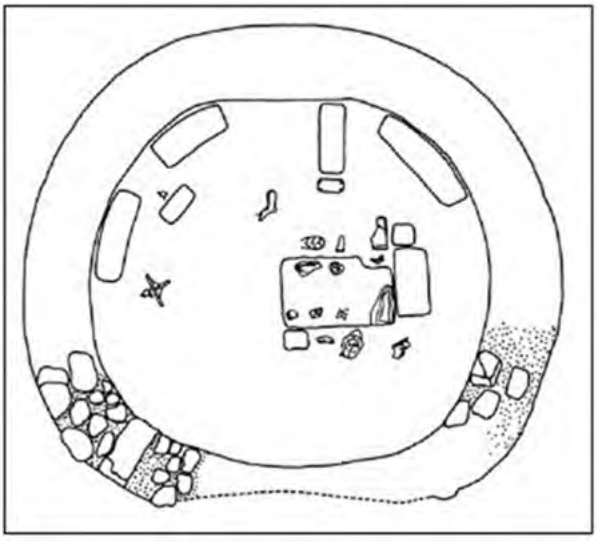
[1028] Ibid: 57.

[1029] Dészpa 2017: 158.

[1030] The life-size portrait of a priest, now in the Dallas Museum of Arts, was obtained on the art market and represents a realistically modelled head of a mature, bearded man, with a high conical hat which surface is richly decorated and a wreath with a central gemstone below the hat, Blömer 2015: 189.



The Dolichenum in Egeta
(Jovičić 2013: 539, fig. 2)



The Sacrarium of Dolichenum in Egeta
(Вучковић Тодоровић 1966: 174, fig. 1)

Three temples of Jupiter Dolichenus are confirmed archaeologically – in Brza Palanka, Karataš and Čezava, with the first one revealing the remains of a *sacrarium* in the Danube Limes. All three *dolichena* were built near or inside military forts. As has been shown, different cult objects have been discovered in Brza Palanka's *sacrarium*, not only belonging to the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus but also belonging to the cult of the god Mithras. A fragmented marble votive icon with a scene of a tauroctony was found beside other cult objects,[1031] thus, confirming the close relationship between the two gods already attested in other localities in the Roman Empire where sanctuaries of the gods were situated near each other (in localities such as Doliche and Dura-Europos, Porolissum in Dacia, Carnuntum and Brigetio in Pannonia Superior, Stockstadt and Saalburg in Germania Superior and probably Virinum in Noricum, where two *Mithraea* are mentioned on the inscriptions from votive monuments).[1032] The same occurrence can be presumed in the locality of Brza Palanka, since the discovered *sacrarium* of Jupiter Dolichenus was built near the Roman fortification (the *sacrarium* was discovered near the oldest of three forts at Egeta, in the area between the civilian settlement and the Late Antique necropolis), as in localities from other Roman provinces, and the supposed *Mithraeum* could have been located in the vicinity. However, the dimensions of the sacred space of the god in Brza Palanka clearly show that it was not a temple, only a *sacrarium*, because in such a small place (3.5x3.8 m), the priest could not have performed rituals and worshippers could not have gathered and celebrated the god in their ritual banquet (some of the sanctuaries of Jupiter Dolichenus had a cultic dining room with benches, where the worshippers would enjoy a ritual banquet after a sacrifice).[1033] Although no uniform rule exists in the context of the architecture, structure and dimensions of so far known *dolichena*, in the context of Brza Palanka's structure, all other sanctuaries are of a considerably larger size, the *dolichenum* in Balaklava was approximately 16.5×11.5 m, the *dolichenum* in Vetus Salina in Pannonia Inferior approximately 17×6 m, the *dolichenum* in Virinum in Noricum 17.7×11.6 m and the *dolichenum* in Vindolanda in Roman Britain 17.73×4.52 m (the sanctuary of the first phase, dated to the first half of the 3rd century).[1034]

Also, cult finds discovered in Brza Palanka must be taken into consideration: the fragmented statue of Jupiter Dolichenus on a bull with a Latin inscription had its back shallowly chipped off, to allow its building into the niche, which implies that it stood somewhere else before being brought to the sacral object in Brza Palanka. Also noticeable is the difference in the craftsmanship of the sculptures — the majority of the

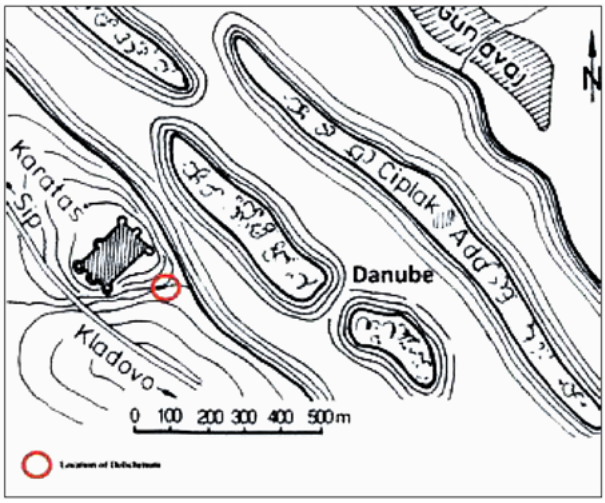
[1031] Different cult objects have been discovered in the *sacrarium* of presumed *dolichenum* in Brza Palanka: three marble statues of Jupiter Dolichenus standing on the bull, one marble statuary composition presenting Jupiter Dolichenus on a bull's back and Juno Dolichena on a hind's back, marble head of Jupiter Dolichenus, a fragmented votive icon of the god Mithras, bronze *tabella ansata* with the dedication of cohors I Cretum, bronze holder for signum with the name of Aurelius Gaius centurion of cohors I Cretum, triangular bronze votive plate, two identical bronze statues of an eagle with half stretched wings, fragments of different marble statues (bull's torso, two hands, sculptural composition with a tree around which is a coiled snake), metal lamp, iron key, coins of emperors Geta and Elagabalus (confirming that the shrine was still in use in the first decades of the 3rd century), Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 173-182.

[1032] Schwarzer 2012: 172.

[1033] Ibid: 181.

[1034] Ibid: 149, 153, 159, 166, 190. For *dolichenum* in Vindolanda, presumed by the find of an altar dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolochenus within a third-century building inside the northern rampart, Tomlin 2018: 371-372.

sculptures are carefully and skilfully modelled, but some sculptures represent average works of art, which additionally could imply that some of the statues were brought to the sacrarium. A large stone block in the shape of an irregular parallelepiped with four oval symmetrically positioned holes in one half of its upper side, which was found in the building, could have served for the display of cult votive reliefs, icons or plates (the holes were maybe for poles on which votive icons were placed for display to Dolichenus' worshipers). Also, we must bear in mind that after 1962, unfortunately, no further excavations were conducted in the vicinity of the supposed *dolichenum* in Brza Palanka, therefore, we lack any knowledge regarding the existence of other possible rooms of the building (*dolichenum*) that probably existed. However, what we can be certain of is that inside the object, almost all types of cult objects (except bronze votive hands, plaques with three or five floriated terminals at the top and votive plaques with inscriptions) connected to the theology and doctrine of Dolichenus' cult, were discovered, implying the full practice of the cult in the locality and the liturgy, perhaps, held in both languages, Greek and Latin.[1035] From other archaeological and epigraphical material found in different localities in the Central Balkans, the existence of *dolichena* or the god's shrines in several other localities can be presumed: in Arčar-Ratiaria, Jasen-Romulianum, Kostolac-Viminacium, Veliko Gradište-Pincum, Ravna-Timacum Minus, Gračanica and Kumanovo. Several monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus and the confirmed presence of his priests (like the sacerdotes Pecta and Guga from Arčar, Aurelius Bassus from Jasen, Achilleus from Kumanovo and Victor Demetrius with Demetrius Ambibius) imply the existence of *dolichena* in the mentioned localities. However, only in Karataš and Čezava do archaeological remains imply the possibility of the existence of either the god's temple or shrine. Thus, in the locality of Karataš, where the remains of fortifications dated from the 1st to the 6th century are attested, a votive altar dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus was found in a niche at the foot of the fortress, some 500-1,000 m east of the camp (similar to Brza Palanka, where the *sacrarium* of the presumed *dolichenum* was situated near the Roman fort). Archaeological excavations of the temple, unfortunately never finished, showed that the temple was oriented towards the north, it had a vault and its walls were built from stone and bricks, carefully painted with white and red. At least two building phases existed, and in the northern and eastern side, walls of a temple yard have been discovered, where Jupiter Dolichenus' adherents gathered.[1036] A similar



The Dolichenum in Karataš
(Jovičić 2013: 541, fig. 6)

The Dolichenum in Čezava
(Васић 1984: 100, fig. 7)

situation can be presumed for the remains of a shrine that existed in the *principia* in a military camp in the locality of Čezava (Novae) in the Danube Limes. During archaeological excavations led from 1965 to 1970,[1037] in the centre of the camp and the area of the *principia* (with a central courtyard flanked by rooms on three sides), the already mentioned bronze *tabella ansata* dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus was discovered.[1038] What supports

[1035] Implicated by the presence of three inscriptions in Latin and one inscription in the Greek language from cult objects found in the sacristy.

[1036] The *dolichenum* was discovered during the archaeological excavations in 1972, which were never finished due to the construction works in the following years, Ранков-Кондић 2009: 384-385.

[1037] In archaeological excavations in Čezava-Novae, seven building phases can be distinguished, dating from the half of the 1st century (perhaps in the period of Claudius' reign) to the period of the 6th century, Васић 1984: 94-102.

[1038] M. Vasić states that in a building phase V, dated to the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century and ending before the second

the possibility of the shrine dedicated to the god in the *principia* is the fact that the object was found near a base for the deity's statue, found in a fragmented state (as, later, the statue of Juno Dolichena as well).[1039] Although a more precise dating of the statues cannot be determined because of their state, the building phase in which they were found is dated to the period of Septimius Severus or Caracalla, therefore, the statues of the divine pair can be dated to the same period.

Who were the dedicants of Jupiter Dolichenus? Among the god's worshippers there were those originally from the east, like Marcus Cocceius Zevxius, Kastor or Pompeius Isauricus (not including priests who were most probably of Oriental origin), but also soldiers from military camps, even entire Cohors, members of civil administration, merchants, freedmen and slaves. From 17 inscriptions known from the Central Balkans, 7 are dedicated by military individuals, 41% of the known inscriptions, more even than in Dacia where from 30 or 32 inscribed monuments to Jupiter Dolichenus, 11 are dedicated by soldiers.[1040] Of course, we are not omitting the possibility that some of the dedicants from other Central Balkan monuments, whose profession is not mentioned or preserved on the monument, could also have been soldiers or merchants and persons related in some way to the army.

Rituals in honour of the god were presumably performed in Central Balkan localities as in any other Roman province. In Rome, the god's statue was carried in a litter around the sanctuary by the litter-bearers (*lecticarii dei*), while the discovery of triangular votive plaques and other cult objects in the localities of Jasen and Brza Palanka confirms their role in ritual processions and the religious community of the *cultores* of Jupiter Dolichenus, who were, as brothers (*fratres*), joined together in cult rites and the liturgical banquet celebrated in honour of the god. The main festival in honour of the god could have taken place in the period of early summer and, besides the main sacrifice, could have included fire sacrifices. After the animal sacrifice,[1041] a ritual feast took place, before which the right shank of the animal was set aside for the god, some other part of the carcass was reserved for the priest, while the *extra* was boiled or grilled and eaten by Dolichenus' worshippers in a liturgical banquet, symbolising them absorbing a part of the divine essence. Since, in the god's sanctuaries and shrines from the Central Balkans, attested adherents of the god were soldiers and civilians too, a joint cultic practice would be suggested, similar to other parts of the Roman Empire. Although we cannot mention any monument similar to those from the Aventine sanctuary, where the titles and names of Jupiter Dolichenus' dedicants are stated, implying a clearly defined hierarchy between them (which, in J. Rüpke's opinion, consisted 'of at least three levels'), we can presume that similar to the cult organisation in the Aventine, a hierarchy in the cult organisation existed in the Central Balkans' localities where the god's cult was venerated.[1042] Thus, the devotees of Jupiter Dolichenus were brothers (*fratres*) and consisted of *patroni* and *candidati,* who probably belonged to two different categories and presumably were limited to 10 members. They were responsible for the organisation and execution of all religious and administrative tasks in the cultic organisation.[1043] The chairman of the group could have had a yearly function, while the presence of other adherents like *sacerdotes, candidati, curator templi, notarius,* etc. is also presumed. As in the case of the *thiasos* attested in Pirot on a monument dedicated to Theos Hypsistos or Sabazius, in Jupiter Dolichenus' cult the function of patron of the candidates existed, which could have been fulfilled by another sacerdos.[1044] In the Jupiter Dolichenus cult organisation, the hierarchy was, at first, based on the religious competence of the members, but later, at the end of the 2nd century, the leading role was taken by *patroni*, who, in J. Rüpke's opinion, were not priests, nor did they possess the necessary theological knowledge.[1045]

As for the workshops where epigraphic and archaeological monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus were made, the majority of epigraphic and statuary monuments were certainly of local origin. As for some sculptural and statuary presentations of the god or deity with his paredra, M. Tomović presumes that the cult objects from the god's *sacrarium* in Brza Palanka were imported from eastern parts of the Empire, while the statues from Jasen and Čezava were from local workshops. I would agree with this opinion, excluding the triangular votive plate from Brza Palanka, which was probably made in some larger cult centre of Jupiter Dolichenus, with a visible influence of Oriental iconography and the marble head of Jupiter Dolichenus from Karataš, for which I suggest that it is probably a work of an Oriental artisan.

half of the 3rd century, certain architectural changes to the principia were made. Although principia held its basic form, a new wide room with an apse was added. In a room in front of the apse, the base of Jupiter Dolichenus' statue was discovered, along with tabella ansata with a dedication to the god, Ibid: 99.

[1039] Ibid.

[1040] Dészpa 2017: 153.

[1041] The analysis of osseous remains from the Iron Age and Roman period in the sanctuary of Jupiter Dolichenus in Dülük Baba Tepesi in Doliche, showed that mostly sheep (younger than one year), than not so frequently cattle, goats, hares, chickens and doves were sacrificed. The right shank would be burnt on the altar and during the Roman period too, reserved for the god, Pollath, Peters 2011: 50-57.

[1042] *CCID* num. 373, 375, 381; Zappata 1996: num. 13, 14, 20; Rüpke 2014: 37, 39, 41.

[1043] J. Rüpke states that the inscriptions from Aventine *dolichenum* clearly show that patrons and candidates were not complementary groups, Rüpke 2014: 40-41.

[1044] Ibid: 47. For *thiasos* in Pirot votive monument see the chapter about Theos Hypsistos' cult in Central Balkans.

[1045] The author suggests that before the reign of the Severan dynasty, *patroni* took a lead in Jupiter Dolichenus' cult organisation, Ibid.

The latest Central Balkan monument of Jupiter Dolichenus dates in the middle of the 3rd century (the *tabella ansata* from the locality of Brza Palanka). Somewhere before the middle of the 3rd century, during the reign of Maximinus Thrax, on the emperor's orders, sanctuaries of Jupiter Dolichenus in all the localities in the Rhine and Danube Limes were looted and destroyed.[1046] Here, I need to make a concise, yet necessary, digression, which concerns some of the arguments I. Toth gave to support the hypothesis that the *dolichenum* in Brza Palanka was also destroyed in the previously mentioned period. I. Toth argues his hypothesis by mentioning 'traces of calcification', *ergo* fire, on the Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena statue from the *sacrarium*, while neither D. Vučković Todorović, nor Lj. Zotović, who both excavated the *sacrarium* in Brza Palanka, mention any traces of fire in the documentation from the excavations or in their subsequent articles. The reasons for marble calcification can be different – high temperature (fire) can be just one of the possibilities. Another argument that I. Toth offers for his hypothesis is that all cult objects from the Brza Palanka's *sacrarium* 'were found scattered about the sanctuary', due to a military attack. However, both excavators and writers of Jupiter Dolichenus' *sacrarium* in Brza Palanka, D. Vučković Todorović and Lj. Zotović, state that all cult objects (except the marble head of Jupiter Dolichenus), were found aligned with the interior wall of the object.[1047] I. Toth also writes that in the *sacrarium* 'traces of wilful destruction and fire' could be observed, but there were no traces of destruction nor traces of fire on the preserved walls of the object or in its interior or on any of the fragments of the archaeological material found in the *sacrarium*. Of course, this does not mean that the *sacrarium* from Brza Palanka did not suffer some kind of damage, either during Maximinus Thrax or later, which curtailed its function, but we certainly cannot currently presume this from existing archaeological testimonies. However, what we do know is that the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus still existed in the middle of the 4th century, attested by a marble plaque from *dolichenum* in Esquiline Hill, but it disappeared soon after.[1048]

[1046] Archeological excavations confirmed the abrupt end of god's sanctuaries, Speidel 1978: 72; Toth 1973: 109-116.

[1047] Вучковић Тодоровић 1965: 173; Zotović 1964: 3.

[1048] Speidel 1978: 73-74.

5. Jupiter Turmasgades

5.1. The Cult of Jupiter Turmasgades in the Central Balkans

Two cults of Asia Minor gods, Jupiter Turmasgades and Jupiter Melanus, confirmed in the territory of the Central Balkan Roman provinces still present quite a mystery among historians of religion, even today, primarily because due to the fact that ancient writers made no mention of them, their theologies and mythologies are unknown and the scarce epigraphic and archaeological material does not help in constructing a more accurate and clearer picture regarding their iconography, aspects under which they were venerated, ritual practices and symbolism they held for their worshippers.

Although not epigraphically, as in several localities from other provinces of Roman Empire, the cult of Jupiter Turmasgades in the Central Balkans could presumably be confirmed with one fragmented limestone statue, now unfortunately lost, which was found in Kostolac, Viminacium. (cat. 1). The fragmented statue represents a bull's head in profile with the remains of an eagle's claws on the animal's head. Analogous representations are known from several monuments all over the Roman Empire, where the only difference is in the animal on which the eagle is perched (stag, goat or bull). In scholarly literature, the motif is known as the 'eagle on quadruped' motif, which was first noticed and discussed by S. Ronzevalle, F. Cumont, H. Seyrig and, later, by St. Przeworski, A. Roes, R. Mouterde and most recently by M. Blömer and C. Crowther.[1049] The usual representations show the eagle sitting on the back of a bull's figure or on a bull's head, which represents an abbreviated form shown more frequently, as in the case of Viminacium's statue, which shows only a bull's head and not the full figure of a bull. The most second favoured quadruped is a stag, after which come a ram and a goat and very rare images of an eagle above a dolphin, boar or a camel.[1050] On the votive monument from Rome, an eagle is presented on a stag's head.[1051] Two presentation of this type are known from the locality of Romula in Dacia – on a votive altar an eagle is perched on a stag's head, while on the other fragmented sculpture an eagle is standing with his claws on an unrecognisable quadruped, which D. Tudor presumes was a stag or a horse.[1052] On a votive altar found in Har Qesari (Caesarea Maritima) an eagle which holds a thunderbolt in his claws is presented, with the figure of the goddess Victoria above it, crowning it.[1053] Since the presentations of the goddess Victoria crowning a god of Asia Minor or Syrian origin are so-far only known from Jupiter Dolichenus' cult, in the case of Har Quesari's monument we are either dealing with the cult of this god or some kind of symbiosis and merging of the iconographic elements from two cults – the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus and the cult of Jupiter Turmasgades. The monument is most probably dedicated to Turmasgades, because of the presence of the last letters of his name on the monument (... sgade).[1054] On a relief from Sarmisegetusa, an eagle is perched on an animal identified as a goat, but since the right part of the animal's head is missing, a stag could be also presented.[1055] A new discovery from 2013, in the shape of an altar from the Dülük Baba Tepesi *dolichenum*, brought another image connected to the cult of the god Turmasgades – an eagle is standing on a large rectangular object divided into nine segments by a grid.[1056] As can be seen from iconographic representations so-far known on monuments dedicated to Turmasgades, an eagle is always presented, probably as a symbol of the god. A direct analogy to the Viminacium statuary composition is not known and the inscription, which was probably on the statue's base, was missing, together with that part of the statue. Analogous to other known Turmasgades' monuments, I presume that the dedicant of Viminacium statue was a soldier or a freedman of Syrian origin, who probably dedicated the monument to the deity in the 3rd century. The god Turmasgades (Τωρμοσγάδη (ς) was an Aramaic deity, whose name as one of the variants of the Greek name Τουρμασγάδη (ς) or Τουρμασγάδες could be translated as 'mountain of prayer' or 'mountain of the sanctuary' (from the Aramaic words 'tur', mountain and 'msgd', place or object of adoration). The form Τουρμασγάδη (ς) as the god's name is found on the inscriptions of

[1049] Blömer, Crowther 2014: 349-350.
[1050] The presentations of an eagle on the figure of a ram or a goat are quite rare, Ibid: 350.
[1051] Bărbulescu 1997: 98, num. 2.
[1052] Tudor 1945: 271. J. F. Gilliam thinks that a fragmented presentation of Turmasgades without inscription was, as the first find from Romula, placed in or near the god's temple, Gilliam 1974: 309.
[1053] Here, I would like to remind of known presentations of Victoria crowning Jupiter Dolichenus from the triangular votive plate from Heddernheim or a bronze statuette of the goddess found in the same locality, Merlat 1951: 319.
[1054] The monument is dated between 132 and 135, *AE* 274.
[1055] A. Popa and I Berciu think that the monument presents either Jupiter Turmasgades or Jupiter Dolichenus, Popa, Berciu 1978: 36, num. 36, Pl. XIII, I.
[1056] Blömer, Facella 2017: 101.

Altar dedicated to Jupiter Turmasgades from Caesarea Maritima (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Altar_of_Julius_Magnus.jpg)

Dura Europos and other localities.[1057] Latin forms of the god's name are Turmasgade, Turmasgada and Turmazgadi (always in the dative).[1058] In earlier literature it was presumed that the genealogy of Turmasgades was similar to that of Dolichenus' Baal – Turmasgades was a local Baal from Commagene, who was, because of his celestial character, connected with Romans equated with the supreme Roman god Jupiter, thus, becoming Jupiter Turmasgades. Although the mythology and theology of this god are almost unknown, the archaeological excavations in the *dolichenum* from Dura Europos, dated to the last year of Septimius Severus' reign, confirmed that Jupiter Dolichenus and Jupiter Turmasgades shared a temple there.[1059] However, this association of the two gods probably originated and existed in the very locality of Doliche, in the sanctuary of Jupiter Dolichenus on Mount Dülük Baba Tepesi. As I have already mentioned, during archaeological excavations in 2013, on the area of the sanctuary in Dülük Baba Tepesi, a small votive altar was found near the entrance of a temple from the Roman period. The votive altar was dedicated to the god Tormasgade (Τωρμοσγάδη (ς)) by a certain Pitoronis (Pitoronis or Pytoronis).[1060] In a votive altar from the *dolichenum* in Dülük Baba Tepesi, besides the inscription dedicated to Tormasgade, an image of eagle standing on a rectangular base was presented, as was a half figure of a solar god with seven rays protruding from his upper head and a pair of hands stretched out sidewards in opposing directions, grasping an object of rectangular shape.[1061] Since the half-figure of a solar deity represents the only so-far known anthropomorphic representation in the monuments of Turmasgades, it would be logical to presume that the male figure represents the god himself, but the seven rays shown around his head indicate that it represents a symbol of the god's rule over the cosmos and not the deity. The combination of the solar god's image, an eagle and pair of hands grasping for some object, in M. Blömer and M. Facella's opinion, represents the god's qualities and attributes, emanating his power, benevolence or protection.[1062] In their opinion, the new find from the *dolichenum* in Dülük Baba Tepesi is very significant because it is the first testimony of Turmasgades' cult in his supposed homeland and the dedication to the god is made by Pitoronis, who was probably of Aramaic origin.[1063] Different authors, in their wish to discover more about the god Turmasgades, have offered different hypotheses about the origin of the god's name and his cult. J. F. Gilliam presumed that Turmasgades' name was translated as 'mountain of the sanctuary' or similar, meaning that he was the god of this mountain.[1064] O. Floca and D. Tudor suggest that the god's name was derived from the name of the town, while F. Heichelheim believed that Turmasgades' cult penetrated from Commagene to other parts of the Roman Empire.[1065]

[1057] Facella 2017: 181; Turcan 1996: 172; Barbulescu 1997: 98.
[1058] Blömer, Facella 2017: 104.
[1059] Votive altar discovered in *dolichenum* in Dura Europos confirmed the association of Jupiter Dolichenus and Jupiter Turmasgades in the temple, but also implied that the devotees of Turmasgades equated deity with god Mithras, Drijvers 1980: 173. The inscription reads: *To Zeus Helios Mithras the sacred, the highest who listens Turmasgade by Ioulianus a soldier of Legio XVI Flavia Firma – the base of the slab was put by Gaius Iulius Germanus for the god who listens Turmasgade*, Blömer, Facella 2017: 107.
[1060] As I already mentioned, the deity's name is one of the variants of the Greek name Τουρμασγάδη (ς) or perhaps Τουρμασγάδες.
[1061] M. Blömer and M. Facella write that the objects for which both hands are grasping for, resemble a book scrolls, a common attribute in the sculptures from North Syria, but not for the gods, Blömer, Facella 2017: 101.
[1062] Facella 2017: 183; Blömer, Facella 2017: 103.
[1063] Blömer, Facella 2017: 108.
[1064] Gilliam 1974: 310.
[1065] Floca 1953: 774-775; Tudor 1945: 413; Зотовић 1977: 34. F. Heichelheim presumed a Commagenian origin of god Turmasgades,

Altar dedicated to Tormasgade from Doliche
(Facella 2017: fig. 7)

Unlike F. Heichelheim, D. Tudor assumed that the god was originally either from Commagene or Syria, while H. J. W. Drivers noticed that there are some similarities between Elagabalus' iconography and the imagery of Jupiter Turmasgades, who he presumed could have be a synonym for Jupiter Dolichenus.[1066] I. P. Haynes stated that Turmasgades was an old deity whose cult had a continuity in Commagene, which would be attested with the inscription of the commander of Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum, from the locality Deva in Dacia, dated to the 2nd century, which implies continuous worship of the god by soldiers from Commagene.[1067] R. Turcan however thought that, like other local Baals, Turmasgades was equated with the supreme Roman god Jupiter after the Roman conquest, which is clearly indicated by the symbol of an eagle in the god's iconography, but did not agree with the attempts made in scholarly literature to see in every image of the eagle on a four-legged animal's head a representation of Turmasgades' cult.[1068] Here R. Turcan is referring to the attempts of authors like D. Tudor or Lj. Zotović, who attributed every representation of an eagle perched on a bull's, stag's or goat's head, to the cult of the god Turmasgades. In their article about the results of archaeological excavations led in 2009 on the northern periphery of the main necropolis in the locality of Perrhe, in Commagene, discussing the remains of a Roman sanctuary, M. Blömer and C. Crowther describe and analyse the iconography of a large relief (1.8 m wide and up to 0.62 m high) in the central area of the main wall of the underground sanctuary.[1069] In the sanctuary, dated to the 2nd or early 3rd century, a relief was discovered, partly damaged (probably deliberately), with the presentation of three eagles perched on stag's heads. The eagles are depicted similarly, with outstretched wings and raised heads, whose orientation is followed by the orientation of the stags' heads. Although damaged, the presentation is very realistically and skilfully carved in fine detail, with the closest analogy in the funerary sculpture from Cyrrhestice (stelae from the localities of Zeugma and Hierapolis).[1070] The relief from the underground sanctuary in Perrhe, reminds the authors M. Blömer and C. Crowther of a Dolichenus relief from Perrhe with the image of an eagle with outstretched wings. They associate certain monuments with images of an eagle with outstretched wings shown over a stag's head with images of Jupiter Dolichenus and Iuno Dolichena, like on a monumental marble statue of an eagle on a stag's head from Esquiline in Rome or a bronze hand from the locality Komana in Cappadocia.[1071] To this argument the authors add a

because one of his devotees, Marcus Arruntius Agrippinus was in cohors II Flavia Commagenorum and because of the mountainous nature of Commagena's relief, Blömer, Facella 2017: 106.

[1066] Tudor 1945-1947: 272; H. J. W. Drijvers describes a votive stele from Syrian locality in the vicinity of place Homs, on which an eagle is presented with spread wings on the mountain top. In his opinion, this image is very alike to the presentations of Turmasgades' monuments, Drijvers 1980: 173.

[1067] Haynes 1993: 148. Two epigraphic monuments dedicated to Jupiter Turmasgades are known from Dacia: *CIL* III, 1338 and *CIL* III, 8027.

[1068] Turcan 1996: 252.

[1069] The underground sanctuary in Perrhe, Commagene, was discovered south from the remains of an early Byzantine Christian basilica. It consisted of two rooms – a main rectangular room and an irregularly formed side room to the north. The relief was in the central area of the headwall in the main room, Blömer, Crowther 2014: 343-346.

[1070] Ibid: 347.

[1071] Monumental marble statue of an eagle standing on a stag's head

relief of an eagle standing on a stag's back from the locality of Mehadia in Dacia.[1072] At the end of their discussion, M. Blömer and C. Crowther conclude that the relief presentation from the underground sanctuary at Perrhe was a dedication to the god worshipped in the sanctuary, who may be Jupiter Dolichenus, whose cult is attested in Perrhe.[1073]

So far only nine inscriptions, with iconographic representations on some of them, are known to be dedicated to the god Turmasgades. The finds are known from the localities of Rome, Trier, Micia, Romula (two statuary finds), Elaioussa Sebaste, Dura Europos (two inscriptions), Cesarea Marittima, Doliche and one monument of unknown provenience (a fragmented *tabula ansata* with a dedication to the god). Except the Rome monument, all monuments are dedicated to the god by soldiers or persons connected to the army.[1074] The iconography of the god Turmasgades is not known, except that the image of a standing eagle represents the deity's substitute and symbol. The close association between the gods Turmasgades, Helios and Mithras (who was a well-known deity in pre-Roman Commagene), in the inscription from the temple of Jupiter Dolichenus and Jupiter Turmasgades in Dura Europos,[1075] indicates Turmasgades' solar and celestial dimension, under which he was also venerated.

If the statuary presentation of an eagle standing on a bull's head from Viminacium was a Jupiter Turmasgades cult monument, the god could have been worshipped together with Jupiter Dolichenus in the *dolichenum* situated in Moesia Superior's capital and important military centre, presumably like he was venerated in Doliche, Vindolanda, Balaklawa and, perhaps, Micia.[1076] As the god of victory and military success, Jupiter Turmasgades presented a role model for soldiers originating from Syria or Commagena, but not only for them. However, his celestial aspect should also be considered and, thus, the broader symbolism of the god, venerated as a deity who was a protector against all evils and failures and the one who brought success, not only on the battlefield, but also in other spheres of mundane life.

from Esquiline in Rome (height 0,55m) has an inscription dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus by a soldier of Misenum fleet. On the palm of a bronze hand from Komana in Cappadocia, an eagle with outstretched wings is presented standing over a stag's head while below it, the images of Jupiter Dolichenus on a bull and Juno Dolichena on a stag are presented, Ibid: 352-353.

[1072] The relief from Mehadia was on a column reused as spolia. It presented an eagle on a stag's back and although there isn't any inscription implying the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, a fragmented statue of a bull and fragmented statue of an eagle was found, making the authors presume the existence of Jupiter Dolichenus sanctuary, Boda, Szabó 2011: 275

[1073] The authors are referring to a votive stele found in the necropolis excavations at Perrhe in 2011. year, dedicated by a soldier from Doliche, Blömer, Crowther 2014: 362.

[1074] Facella 2017: 182. For a detailed list of Turmasgades' monuments see Blömer, Facella 2017: 111-114.

[1075] The temple was called *dolichenum* by the excavators, but twin naoi with two altars in the courtyard clearly showed that the temple housed two deities of which one god was Turmasgades and the other god was Dolichenus, Gilliam 1974: 312-313, num. 8.

[1076] Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum was stationed in Micia, where the cults of Jupiter Hieropolitanus, Turmasgades and Jupiter Dolichenus were presumably venerated in the same sacred space, Berciu, Petolescu 1976, 13; Szabó 2018: 131.

6. The Cult of Jupiter Melanus and other Asia Minor Local Gods

6.1. The Cult of Jupiter Melanus and other Asia Minor local gods in the Central Balkans

The cults of several local Asia Minor gods, equated with the Roman supreme deity Jupiter, were also epigraphically attested in different Central Balkan localities, implying not only the presence of individual dedicants, but also the existence of private associations of Asia Minor migrants settled in the mentioned territory. Since the majority of the epigraphic material is attested in mining districts, it is most probable that the dedicants in question came from their homeland, worked in mines or quarries in different parts of the Central Balkans rich in ores and stone, where they continued to venerate their ancestral gods.

The first of the local Asia Minor gods whose cult is confirmed with four votive monuments in the territory of the Central Balkans is Jupiter Melanus. All four monuments dedicated to the god were discovered in the southern part of the territory, in the localities of Prizren and Lipljan (Ulpijana). The first of the four epigraphic monuments dedicated to Jupiter Melanus was discovered during archaeological excavations in 1962, in the Holy Archangel's Monastery in Prizren (cat. 1).[1077] The monument was found in a fragmented state, but the inscription could be read with the dedication to Iupiter Optimus Maximus Melanus from four dedicants. Unfortunately, due to the damage to part of the monument, only the names of Martinus and Septimius are visible, while the other two names could be presumed as Caesonius and Gallicanus (by S. Dušanić and A. and J. Šašel).[1078]The name Martinus is known from many Central Balkan monuments, but also from other Roman provinces.[1079] The name Septimius has been confirmed in the Central Balkans and beyond the territory,[1080] while the two other proposed names, Caesonius and Gallicanus are unknown on epigraphic documents from the central part of the Balkans territory.[1081] Given the presence of Asia Minor immigrants in the territory of Prizren and generally in southern parts of the Central Balkans, where rich mines were exploited and immigrants worked as miners, it is probable that the dedicants were Bithynians who worked in the mines of Dardania.[1082] However, since the area of Prizren was not a mining district, it is possible that the dedicants travelled along the *via metallica* Naissus-Lissus and erected the dedication to their homeland god while passing through Prizren, in the 3rd or the 4th century.[1083]

Three votive altars dedicated to the god were all found in an important Antique locality, situated between Priština and Skoplje and known as Ulpiana (Iustiniana Secunda). The first votive altar was discovered during archaeological excavations in 1960 and bears a dedication of Aelius Octavianus to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Melanus Cidiessus (cat. 2). The epithet Cidiessus should probably be understood as a toponym from the name of the Phrygian town Kidyessos, which was in the vicinity of Dorylaeum, a town were Trajan's coins with the inscription Zeus Melenos were issued. Although the gentile name Aelius is very frequent in the Central Balkans, the cognomen Octavianus is very rare. [1084] The dedicant was a veteran, although F. Peja suggests that he was a *vir egregius* who erected the monument in honour of his homeland god at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century.[1085]

The second confirmation of the Jupiter Melanus cult was, again, discovered during archaeological exca-

[1077] Душанић 1971: 254-257.
[1078] Ibid: 256; *IlJug* 1978: 531A.
[1079] The name Martinus was probably derived from the name of Roman god Mars and appears in the votive monument from Stojnik, *IMS* I: 145, num. 135; votive altar from Čair, Viminacium, *IMS* II: 90-99, num. 53; votive monument from Niš, *IMS* IV: 68-69, num. 3; *CIL* III, 8085; *AE* 1972, 501. The name Martinus is also known from different monuments in Moesia Superior, Dacia, Dalmatia, Italy, Gallia Belgica and Spain, Bošković-Robert 2006: 58, ft. 384.
[1080] The name Septimius appears on a votive monument from Arčar, *AE* 1979, 539; votive monument from Singidunum and Guberevac, *IMS* I, 71, num. 45, 134; on four votive monuments from Ravna Timacum Minus, *IMS* III/2, 96-97, num. 48, 105, num. 60, 119, num. 83, 122-123, num. 90. Also, the name is very frequent in both Pannoniae (even on 106 monuments), Italy, Dalmatia, Spain, Dacia etc., Bošković-Robert 2006: 94, ft. 618.
[1081] If the proposed reading of S. Dušanić is accepted, the names Caesonius and Gallicanus aren't confirmed before on the Central Balkans territory. The name Caesonius is as cognomen known only in Italy, while as a gentile name, it appears on the monuments from Dalmatia, Italy, Gallia, Pannonia etc. The name Gallicanus is so-far known in Gallia, Gallia Belgica, Dacia, Spain, Italy, on one monument from Dalmatia, one monument in Pannonia and one monument from Aquitaine, Ibid: 108, ft. 714-715.
[1082] S. Dušanić presumes that four dedicants who erected the monument to their god Jupiter Melanus were of Asia Minor origin and that they were probably peregrines, slaves or freedmen, Душанић 1971: 257.
[1083] Beneficiary stations are confirmed as in Prizren, as in the village Škozi near Prizren, Мирковић 1971: 263-271; S. Dušanić presumes that Prizren monument is probably dedicated by Bithynians who were settled in Dardania and worked in mines, Душанић 1971: 257.
[1084] On the territory of Central Balkans Roman provinces, the cognomen Octavianus is known only from the village Sopot on the south of Moesia Superior, *IMS* VI: 54-55, num. 10, while outside of the mentioned territory, it is confirmed in Italy, Gallia, Pannonia, Spain and Roman Britain, as in localities of Africa, Bošković-Robert 2006: 99, ft. 653.
[1085] Mirdita 1980: 187; Peja 1984: 60.

vations of the eastern walls of the city of Ulpiana, in 1987 (cat. 3). The dedicant Asclepiades was most probably of Greek or Oriental origin, because he dedicated the monument to Jupiter Melanus Paternus.[1086] The absence of his gentile name and cognomen imply that he was a stranger without Roman citizenship or that he was a slave.[1087] As a cognomen, Asclepiades is a name known from one of the votive altars from Sočanica and as a name from votive monuments in Moesia Inferior, Dacia, Apamea, etc.[1088] The epithet of the god, Paternus, clearly implies that the dedicant was making a vow to his homeland god, probably during the 3rd century.[1089]

The third confirmation of Jupiter Melanus' cult was also discovered in the locality of Ulpiana, with a dedication by Marcus Aurelius Octavius, who probably received his citizenship during the reign of Caracalla or Marcus Aurelius or even Commodus (cat. 4).[1090] The god is addressed as *Melanus Cidiessus*, a clear confirmation of a syncretistic deity who was venerated by local communities in Asia Minor, but also mentioned on the first discovered monument from Ulpiana. The dedicant, Macus Aurelius Octavius, was probably an immigrant of Asia Minor origin.[1091] The cognomen Octavius is known from votive monuments discovered in the localities of Rašće and Volkovo,[1092] but it appears more rarely in the Central Balkans than the gentile name Octavius.[1093] The monument is dated to the first half of the 3rd century.[1094]

Here, another votive altar found in Ulpiana should be mentioned, because it may also be attributed to Phrygian migrants who were present in the city. The monument was found used as *spolia* in the western necropolis of Ulpiana and contains a dedication in Greek to the god Ζεύς Ἐζζαίος, who was a local god of the Phrygian town of Aizanoi, in the north-western part of Phrygia (cat. 5).[1095] The dedicant is Apollonios, son of Menelaos, who was probably an immigrant or descendant of an Asia Minor immigrant and who made a vow to his homeland god, probably in the 1st or the 2nd century. It is interesting that Aizanoi is not far from Kidyessos, where the local Zeus/Jupiter Cidiessus was venerated, nor from the locality of Dorylaeum where coins with the legend of Zeus Melanos were found.

As can be seen from currently known epigraphic material connected to the local Asia Minor gods equated with Roman Jupiter, the cults of the god Jupiter Melanus and the syncretistic deity Jupiter Melanus Cidiessus are attested in the Central Balkans only in the vicinity of Prizren and in the territory of Ulpiana, with four votive altars whose dedicants were most probably of Asia Minor or Syrian origin. Zeus Melenos (Μεληνός), known from Trajan's coins from the Phrygian town of Dorylaeum, was a local Asia Minor deity, whose epithet Μεληνός was probably derived from the name of the city of Mele in Bithynia or, perhaps, from the names of the villages Melakome (Μηλος κώμη) or Malos (Μαλος) in central Phrygia. Both epithets of the god Jupiter, Melanus and Cidiessus, attested on one of Ulpiana's monuments, belonged to local Asia Minor deities, who were worshipped by the members of the local community. The affirmation of the cult in which two local gods were joined could mirror a custom characteristic for Asia Minor (and eastern provinces for that matter) of forming associations of residents of two particular settlements, because of certain ritual practices or something similar. One association (*phratra*) formed from the members of two Phrygian villages from the area of Dionysopolis, Salouda and Melokome, was attested on a slab found in the locality of Kabalar (Motella), dated to the 2nd or 3rd century, whose inscription affirms that the brotherhood of Saloudians and Melokometans dedicated the slab.[1096]

The cult of Zeus Melenos was most probably brought to the Central Balkans by immigrants of Asia Minor origin, who were employed in some of the Dardanian mines. Since the territory of Ulpiana was a centre of the important mining district, formed because of the vicinity of the mines (Novo Brdo, Ajvalija and Janjevo),[1097] the dedicants of votive monuments most probably worked in the mines or were somehow related to the mines and venerated their ancestral gods as their protectors from all misfortunes, but perhaps also in a narrower sense, as the protectors of mines and miners. This hypothesis is plausible, because the cult of Zeus Melenos came from Anatolia, an area rich in ores, so

[1086] Parović-Pešikan 1990: 610-611.
[1087] Ibid: 612.
[1088] The name Asclepiades is known from the Syrian locality Apamea, *AE* 1993, 1578; votive monument from Moesia Inferior where the dedicant is a slave, *AE* 1996, 1341; on a votive monument from Dacia, *CIL* III, 1324. As a cognomen, Asclepiades is confirmed on several localities of Moesia Inferior, Italy, Dacia, Pannonia, Gallia Belgica, Dalmatia, Noricum and on one votive monument from Spain, Bošković-Robert 2006: 100, num. 116.
[1089] Parović-Pešikan 1990: 610.
[1090] Peja 1984: 60; Bošković-Robert 2006: 100, ft. 639.
[1091] Ibid.
[1092] *IMS* VI: 113-114, num. 106, 132, num. 137.
[1093] The cognomen Octavius is known from the monuments found in Italy, Gallia Belgica, Pannonia and on one monument from Dalmatia, Noricum and Dacia. As a gentile name, Octavius frequently appears on the monuments from almost all Roman provinces, Bošković-Robert 2006: 99, ft. 658.
[1094] Peja 1984: 60.
[1095] Душанић 1971: 258-269, fig. 3; Aizanoi or Aezani was an old Greek city in western Anatolia, where beside theatre, stadium, Roman baths and large necropolis, two significant sanctuaries existed – a temple of Meter Steunene, a local variant of the goddess Cybele/Magna Mater and a temple of god Zeus.
[1096] The full name of the phratra was [ἡ Σαλουδέων κ]αὶ Μηλοκωμήτων φράτρα. The slab contains in its upper part relief of the goddess Cybele on the throne flanked with two lions and the god Hermes in the top right corner. Beneath the relief, the figures of members of phratra are presented with their names (at least 14 of them, since the slab is damaged in the lower part), Ramsey 1895: 156, num. 64.
[1097] Soon after getting municipal status, Ulpiana became an administrative centre of all *metalla Dardaniae*.

it is possible that the god had the same function as protector of mines and miners in Asia Minor too. Thus, migrants who worked in the Dardanian mines could have had the same profession in their homelands, as seems to be the case with dedicants of Jupiter Melanos, because their Asia Minor origins can be traced to regions known for mining or quarrying. The dedications are addressed to Jupiter Melanus, which confirms that all dedicants were already Romanised, otherwise the dedications would have been in Greek.[1098] Since on one of the votive altars from Ulpiana, Jupiter Melanus is worshipped as Paternus, it is certain that the dedicant considered him to be his ancestral god and, possibly, the god held the same meaning for the whole local association of Asia Minor immigrants in Ulpiana. These private associations of foreign migrants, known as *phratra* or *collegia*, are known from other Roman provinces as well, whether their members were in military or civilian service. The *collegia* of Asia Minor miners from Galatia (or the neighbouring Asia Minor regions) are presumed in the mining district of Rosia Montana in Dacia,[1099] where the sanctuary of the god Jupiter Erusenus, with several dedications from the god's Asia Minor dedicants, was confirmed and whose cult was attested in his homeland only with one dedication, at the Roman Baths at Ankara.[1100] The same can be said for the cults of Zeus of the inhabitants of the Seven villages,[1101] Zeus Narenos, Zeus Sarnendenos and Zeus Kimistenos, who were homeland deities of Asia Minor immigrants who came to and worked in the mining districts of Dacia. Returning to the territory of the Central Balkans, it is interesting that the Galatian presence was also attested in the south of the territory, by the votive monument from Nerezi near Scupi However, without any information about the Galatians' professions, it can only be presumed that they were part of the castellum's garrison in the vicinity of Scupi.[1102] I have already mentioned the presumable private association of immigrants from the area of Doliche that existed in Viminacium (*chôra Ouarn*) to which two more associations should be added, confirmed in epigraphic monuments from the same locality – persons from κώμη Σιγῶν and Abdarmisu in Commagenian Germaniceia.[1103] Another association of Asia Minor immigrants is attested in the northern part of the Central Balkans in Singidunum, of Cilices Contirones, who were a part of the Legia IV Flavia, stationed in the city.[1104] They dedicated a votive altar to the god Jupiter for the health of Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta and they were recruited into the Legia IV Flavia in 196. This ethnic association that, perhaps, consisted of the legion's sailors, may have had a club and *sacellum* in Singidunum during the 3rd century. Since on all three inscriptions the provenience of the associations is emphasised, it could be presumed that the reason for forming these private associations of immigrants was to preserve the national identity of the associations' members, based on their mutual ethnicity.

Only one votive monument from the Central Balkans Roman provinces confirms the cult of the god Zeus Okkonènos (cat. 6). The monument was found in the village of Babe in 1950 and besides the inscription, it contains a relief with an image of a star.[1105] The dedication in Greek is made by Sokratès, son of P(a)ulos, who was probably an Asia Minor migrant. Although the monument represents a unique dedication to the god Zeus Okkonenos, two votive monuments from the territory of Nicopolis in Moesia Inferior are known to have been dedicated to the same god[1106] and imply Bithynian immigrants as dedicants, who were settled in Moesia Inferior. The epithet Okkonènos could be derived from a toponym Ὀκαηνῶ[ν] κώμη, confirmed in an inscription discovered in Tarakli, near Nicaea, in Bithynia.[1107] The monument dedicated by Sokratès was found in the Kosmaj region, which represented a significant mining district, therefore, it can be presumed that Sokratès was employed as a miner in one of the Kosmaj mines, perhaps during the 2nd century.[1108]

A votive altar dedicated to Zeus Synenos (cat. 7) was found also in the village of Guberevac, near the village of Babe (like the previous monument dedicated to Zeus Okkonènos) in 1984, with an inscription in Greek, dedicated to the god by Antipater, son of Timotheos.[1109] The home-town of Antipater was probably the city of Synnada or some place in its vicinity, in central Phrygia

[1098] The first Asia Minor settlers used Greek in their dedications, but in time as they became romanised they used Latin. From the second half of the 2nd century, the majority of inscriptions in Central Balkans' are in Latin.

[1099] Several private associations of Galatians and Bithynians are attested in Dacia, dedicating to their homeland gods, like to the local Galatian deity from the locality Nara, in votive altar found in the locality Alburnus Maior or to the Bythinian Cimistenus, confirmed in the inscription from Apulum, Petolescu 1978: 211-215.

[1100] The votive monument to Zeus Erosenos from Ankara is dedicated by certain Pontus, Mitchell 2017: 15-16. The cult of Jupiter Erusenus is attested by two votive altars (from Napoca and the territory of Alburnus Maior), while his sanctuary existed in the mining district of Rosia Montana, probably built by Asia Minor immigrants who worked in near-by mines, Ibid: 16-17.

[1101] The seven villages belonged to the imperial state chora Considiana from Asia Minor, Ibid: 18.

[1102] A marble plate, broken in four parts, with floral ornaments was found in the locality Nerezi near Scupi (where the remains of Roman castellum were discovered) with the inscription *[X]αίρετε, Γαλ|άται, IMS* VI, 154, num. 187.

[1103] *IMS* II: num. 169, 211, 213. Also, Κώμη Ἰαβάντων mentioned in *IMS* II: num. 212, could belong to the same region.

[1104] The presence of Cilices contirones in Singidunum is attested by a stamp on a lamp found near presumed Roman forum in Belgrade, but also on a votive monument found in the very centre of the city dating to 196 and dedicated to god Jupiter by Cilices contirones, *IMS* I, num. 3; Грбић 2008: 221-227.

[1105] *IMS* I: num. 114.

[1106] Bošković-Robert 2006: 112-113, num. 136.

[1107] *IMS* I: 114; Parović-Pešikan 1990: 612, ft. 23; Grbić 2015:132.

[1108] *IMS* I: 103.

[1109] Petković 1997: 185-187.

(Σύναος or Συνέων κώμη).[1110] The quality of the votive altar implies the good financial standing of Antipater and therefore his involvement in activities other than mining, like, for example, stonemasonry, since his homeland had a long tradition of this. It is possible to assume that Antipater was a stonemason, settled in Moesia Superior during the 2nd century.[1111]

In the context of the possibility of a dedication made to a particular local Zeus of Asia Minor or Syrian origin, a unique dedication to Deus Aeternus dating from the 2nd or 3rd century deserved to be mentioned.[1112] Discovered in the locality Drmno, Viminacium, the monument is dedicated to Deus Aeternus by a certain Publius Aelius Hermes, whose cognomen implies Greek or Oriental origin. The representation of an eagle holding (devouring) a snake in his beak in the upper part of the monument is highly suggestive that this is a Jovian symbol, which could well support the interpretation that the dedication was to Zeus/Jupiter, that is to an unknown supreme deity of perhaps Oriental origin equated with the Roman supreme god.[1113]

In scholarly literature, there are differing opinions concerning the origin of Deus Aeternus – that he was of Syrian origin,[1114] that the god was equated with Jupiter Dolichenus[1115] or associated with Theos Hypsistos.[1116] Discussing a new reading of the inscription dedicated to Deus Aeternus from the locality of Novae in Moesia Inferior, J. Bartels and A. Kolb presume that the cult originated in the Balkans and incorporated elements from various cults, such as those of Theos Hypsistos or Jupiter Dolichenus.[1117] In his analysis of Deus Aeternus, S. Nemeti suggests that the god should be regarded as Jupiter and that he was an eternal deity without a beginning or an end, bearing the epithets of the supreme Roman god and presented with his iconographic attributes.[1118] Monuments dedicated to Deus Aeternus have been attested in Dacia and Pannonia, in large urban centres like Sarmizegetusa, Apulum and Intercisa, analogous to the occurrence of the dedication to the god found in a major urban centre as Viminacium certainly was.[1119] Unfortunately, there are no additional elements which would allow any further hypothesis – the cognomen Hermes points to the dedicant's Greek or Oriental origin, but does not allow us to assign Publius Aelius Hermes to any particular ethnic group.

In an important urban centre like Viminacium, the veneration of local supreme deities from Asia Minor and Syria is attested. In that context, it can be presumed that this solitary attestation of Deus Aeternus' cult should either be attributed to a small group of worshippers from Viminacium or to a traveller or group of travellers who passed through Central Balkan territory where they left a mark of their devotion to the supreme divinity whose identity is unknown to us, but whom they clearly venerated as a supreme deity.

Returning to the mining districts in the southern parts of the Central Balkans, that is to the territory of the Late Antique province of Dardania, besides Ulpiana, many Greek names have also been attested in epigraphic inscriptions from the locality of Sočanica, the presumed Antique locality of Municipium DD. In the earlier conclusions of scholars, based on discovered epigraphic material, the presence of Asia Minor immigrants, particularly from Phrygia and Bithynia, was attested multiple times in the mining districts of Roman Dardania.[1120] No data about the Roman settlement of Municipium DD exist in historical sources, but archaeological excavations during the 1960s and '70s yielded the remains of an important Antique locality with a Roman forum, basilica, *thermae* and other public buildings in the eastern part of the town. The reason for situating the centre of the city in the east can be found in the vicinity of metallurgical objects, which were of great importance to the settlement.[1121] The Roman settlement in Sočanica-Municipium DD lasted from the end of the 1st to the end of the 3rd century, probably gaining the status of municipium during the reign of Septimius Severus.[1122] In the northern part of the Roman forum area, an inscription dedicated to the god Antinous was discovered, in a temple built between 136 and 137,[1123] representing the only sanctuary of the god or sacred space where the god had his shrine

[1110] Ibid.
[1111] Quarries existed near Synnada, Ibid.
[1112] The marble votive monument (dim. 0,97x0,58x0,35m) was discovered at the locality Drmno, Viminacium, now in National museum in Požarevac. In the upper part of the monument, an eagle with a snake in his beak is presented. The inscription reads: *Deo Ae/terno P(ublius) / Ael(ius) Hermes / pro sal(ute) sua su/orumque v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito), IMS* 2, num. 1; http://lupa.at/5427
[1113] The presentation of an eagle grasping a snake in its beak symbolises the struggle and triumph of good against the evil. The motif appears in the ancient Greek art, from the second quarter of the 6th century in so-called the Rider Amphorae, to continue to appear through the Roman art, for more Pérez 2010: 4-5; Wittkower 1939: 293-325. See Coombe, Grew, Hayward, Henig 2015: 124-126, pl. 84, num. 229; Lerz, Henig, Hayward 2017: 19-35. On the votive altar dedicated to Jupiter from Apulum, a prodigy in which two men liberated an eagle from a snake, is recorded, Ibid: 22-30; *CIL* III, 17756.
[1114] Cumont 1929: 119-120; Drijvers 1981: 254; Bărbulescu 2003: 183.
[1115] Macrea 1969: 369-370; Bartels, Kolb 2011: 417-420.
[1116] Bartels, Kolb 2011: 420.
[1117] Ibid 2011: 411-428.
[1118] Nemeti 2005: 283.
[1119] Szabó 2018: 92-93; Onofrei 2014: 226-227; For the complete corpus of epigraphic monuments dedicated to Deus or Dominus Aeternus see Bartels, Kolb 2011: 423-427.
[1120] Čerškov 1970: 65-66; Parović-Pešikan 1990: 612.
[1121] Four large necropolises were discovered on a wider territory of Municipium DD (two near the town and two somewhat further), Фидановски 1994: 268.
[1122] Perhaps around 200, Милин 2002: 163.
[1123] The sanctuary near which' entrance the inscription dedicated to Antinous was discovered, was a tetrastyle prostyle temple on a high base, with the rectangular cella, surrounded by a porch, thus belonging to simple provincial sanctuaries built at the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century, Чершков 1970: 22.

in the territory of the Central Balkans.[1124] Different authors have read the inscription in various ways and the version by S. Dušanić revised by J. Šašel can be considered the final one.[1125] The Bithynian Antinous was a beautiful young man, adored by the emperor Hadrian, with whom he travelled frequently, and on one of these journeys Antinous unfortunately drowned.[1126] After his death in 130, Antinous was deified by Hadrian, who built a town where Antinous died, calling it Antinoopolis. Statues and other representations of the prematurely deceased young man started to appear from that time on, primarily in Egypt, where Antinous' cult was celebrated and honoured. Outside Egypt, temples of the deity are known only in Lanuvium, Mantinea and perhaps Sočanica-Municipium DD, but also in Carnuntum. The cult of Antinous was not generally accepted in the western provinces,[1127] but where the young Bithynian was venerated, he was honoured under different aspects – as a iatric deity, as a prophet, but also as a saviour and protector in the Afterlife. Ancient writers like Origen state that Antinous had prophetic or healing powers. [1128] On coins from Delphi the god is Antinous Propylaius (guardian of the gates), while his association primarily with the god Osiris, with whom he was equated, connects him with the underworld but also with the afterlife and hopes of resurrection and eternal life.[1129] Besides Osiris, Antinous was also equated with Apollo, Silvanus, Vertumnus, Dionysus/Bacchus, Hermes and Belenus, but also with a number of mythical heroes like Adonis, Ganymede, Orpheus, Narcissus, Alexander the Great, etc. However, returning to the Sočanica inscription honouring Antinous, several authors have offered different explanations for the existence of Antinous' cult and probably a shrine or a temple in Municipium DD, starting with S. Dušanić, who linked the introduction of the cult with the probable presence of Bithynian miners.[1130] M. Šašel Kos, however, rejects this assumption and thinks that the introduction of Antinous' cult in Sočanica was solely the deed of Hadrian's promoting the cult, through L. Aelius Caesar, Hadrian's stepson and former governor of both Pannoniae, who could have initiated such propaganda in a settlement where the presence of Phrygians and Bythinians was significant. His goal would be to introduce the cult, which would bring the residents from eastern provinces closer to the official imperial religion. The settlement in Sočanica was ideal for such an intent, because besides the indigenous population, a significant number of Greek and Orientals lived in the town and the Hellenistic influences were strong. A similar situation can be observed in Thrace, where the Antinous cult was known and venerated in several localities like Varna, Šumensko, Plovdiv, etc., but also in Scupi (the cult is confirmed with vessels shaped in the form of three-dimensional busts similar to Antinous' bust), where the introduction of the cult was perhaps connected with Hadrian's activities in the Balkans (his restoration of the old road network in Moesia Superior and the building of a new road which would have shortened the journey from the Djerdap Gorge through Viminacium and Niš to Scupi).[1131] Thus, in the formation of the Antinous cult, the most important persons were not miners, but rich members of Greek and Oriental communities who saw in Antinous' cult an opportunity to integrate further into the upper class of the city's aristocracy and to prove their loyalty to the Roman emperor.[1132]

I would like to mention one more votive monument which was, perhaps, dedicated by a migrant from Lydia, found in the vicinity of Lece and dedicated to the Lydian queen Omphale. As is well known, Omphale's cult was venerated in Lydia and in Thessaly, where she had a temple in the vicinity of the thermal springs. The votive monument was found in the locality of Crkvine, in the Lece area and its dedicant is a certain Aelius Saturnius, who acquired his gentilicium probably during Hadrian's or Antoninus Pius' reign.[1133] This Aelius Saturninus also dedicated a votive altar found in the locality of Gazdare, to the god Hercules, thus confirming the already mythologically known close relationship between Omphale and Hercules and indicating the god's role as a protector of thermal springs and an iatric deity.[1134]

[1124] The inscription dedicated to the god Antinous was discovered during the archaeological excavations led in the Roman settlement near Sočanica (from 1956 to 1965), under the porch of the deity's temple, in the vestibule of the excavated sanctuary near its entrance, Душанић 1971: 241-261; Šašel-Kos 2009: 177.

[1125] The inscription reads: *Antinoo He[roi aedem (?) iussu] / Imp(eratoris) Caesaris T[raiani Hadriani Aug(usti)] / et L. Aelii [Caesaris Aug(usti) f(ilii)] / coloni arg[entariarum Dardanicarum] / curante Telesph[oro ?proc(uratore) Aug(usti) lib(erto) fec(erunt)],* Šašel-Kos 2009: 178-179.

[1126] The circumstances of how Antinous really died aren't clear still (whether he drowned or offered voluntarily to die), but it is certain that Hadrian was very stricken by his death until the end of his life. A. Birley thinks that equitation of Antinous with Osiris and a fact that young Bithynian deliberately died on god's anniversary or approximately in that period, are not a mere coincidence, Birley 2013: 248.

[1127] The temple in Lanuvium was dedicated to Antinous and Diana, Ibid: 180.

[1128] Origen III.36,

[1129] Scott 2015: 224.

[1130] Душанић 1971: 255-259.

[1131] During the archaeological excavations at the south-eastern necropolis in Scupi (2008-2012), two identical anthropomorphic pottery vessels (flagons) were found with recipients shaped like three-dimensional male busts of youth identified with Antinous. It is presumed that these head-shaped vessels were used for wine (honey or other liquids?), however not in everyday life but as ritual vessels for libation, votive offerings in the temples or as funerary offerings in the graves, which would be their function in this particular case, having in mind that they were found in the necropolis. The head-shaped vessels from Scupi necropolis are dated in the period of the 2nd to the early 3rd century, Jovanova 2016: 30-37.

[1132] Гугољ, Тешић Радовановић 2013: 439-440.

[1133] The votive altar from locality Crkvine was found in 1950. year and represents, to my knowledge rare testimony of dedication made to Hercules and Omphale – similar dedication was found in Rome, *IMS* IV: 110, *CIL* 6, 3473. The inscription reads: *Om/pha/lae / Ael(ius) / Satu/rninus / d(onum) d(edit).*

[1134] Петровић 1969: 225-227, num. 1, fig. 1; Gavrilović 2014: 132.

7. Mēn

7.1. The Cult of the god Mēn in Graeco-Roman culture

Due to numerous inscriptions and relief cult presentations discovered mainly in the territory of Asia Minor' province of Maeonia, the cult of the god Mēn can be considered one of the best known Asia Minor cults, in the context of its iconography and aspects under which the deity was worshipped. The god Mēn was a lunar deity, known sometimes in the Roman period by the name Luna[1135] and, although the archaeological and epigraphic material attested his Anatolian origin, in the past he was considered by some authors as a god of Semitic origin.[1136] A significant Persian influence is noticeable in the god's cult and iconography[1137] and whether the god Mēn was by origin an Anatolian deity or he was adapted over time into the pantheon of Asia Minor gods, in Antiquity he was comprehended as a Phrygian god, although most of his monuments were discovered in the north-eastern part of Lydia, where the god's cult was very popular.[1138]

The name of the god Mēn, *Maen*, was very quickly Hellenized in the form *Μήν* and was related to the words *μήν, μήνη* (the moon), which probably brought the transformation of the deity from a god with solar attributes to a lunar divinity, whose main symbol was a motif of a crescent.[1139] Some authors thought that Mēn encompassed certain characteristics of a solar deity, for example the form of his name *Maen* is similar to the name of the Phrygian solar god Manes, but, based on the analysis of epigraphic and archaeological monuments of the god, it is obvious that he was venerated as a lunar divinity.[1140]

Numerous epithets under which vows were made to the god on votive monuments from Asia Minor attest the previously statement – in Maeonia, a significant number of the god's local epithets are known, with the epithet *Αζιοττηνός* the most frequent, derived from the name of the main Maeonian centre of the god, *Αζιοττα.*[1141] This epithet is also attested on epigraphic monuments from Eumenia, Apollonia, Alia and Aphrodisias, but also on the coins of the city of Sardis.[1142] On votive monuments, *Μήν Αζιοττηνός* is mentioned alone, unlike *Μήν Τιάμου* who always appears in vows with his paredra, the goddess Artemis Anaitis.[1143] Other important epithets of the god under which he is attested are *Φαρνάκου,*[1144] *Κάρου,*[1145] *Τιάμου,*[1146] *Τουιτηνος, Ξευναγονηνός, Γοισηανός, Γαλλικώ,*[1147] *Άνείκητος,*[1148] *Φωσφόρος, ούράνιος, έπιφανής, επήκοος,*[1149] Kamareites[1150] and Patrios. Under the epithets τύραννος and κύριος, Mēn was worshipped as the master of his dedicants' lives and destinies. Votive

[1135] Romans sometimes called the Anatolian god by the name of Luna (regardless of gender), which can be seen on inscriptions which bear the formula L.V.S. interpreted as 'lunae votum solvit', like on the honourary inscription for duovir Gaius Albucius Firmus who financed the gymnastic contests during the festivities of god Mēn, *CMRDM* III: 57; Levick 1970: 49-50.

[1136] Wright 1895: 69.

[1137] In E. N. Lane's opinion, three main reasons for significant Persian influence of god's cult and iconography existed: strong imagery similarities between god Mēn and Iranian lunar god Mao, the fact that the paredra of Anatolian god was most frequently the goddess Artemis Anaeitis (originally Annahita, Persian goddess of fertility, water, health, healing and wisdom), *CMRDM* III: 113; Lane 1990: 2170-2171.

[1138] Ricl 1995: 41-42.

[1139] Wright 1895: 66.

[1140] Perdrizet 1896: 77-78.

[1141] Several forms of god's name with the epithet *Αζιοττηνός* have been attested, for example *Μήν Αζιττηνός,* Ricl 1995: 35. For the inscriptions of god with this epithet see *CMRDM* I: num. 50, 58, 77, 80.

[1142] Perdrizet 1896: 90.

[1143] Wright 1895: 55-74.

[1144] Strabo mentions god Men as a deity to whom a rich sanctuary in Pontus was dedicated and E. N. Lane believes that the epithet *Φαρνάκου* was derived from the name of the founder of Pontes' sanctuary, Pharnaces, who was a legendary founder of Pontus and Cappadocian dynasty, *CMRDM* III: 67.

[1145] This epithet is actually the personal name of the dedicant in the genitive. It designates the individual (usually pater familias of a family or the person in charge for the god's cult association), who built a local sanctuary of god Mēn, Ricl 1995: 35-36.

[1146] The epithet Tiamu (Τιάμου) was in the opinion of J. H. Wright, derived from the name of Semitic (Babylonian) goddess Tiamat, who was a deity of underwaters and therefore, it is presumed that the epithet was actually a synonym of the epithet katachthonios and that it implied Mēn's chthonian function, Wright 1896: 68-69. However, E. N. Lane thinks that the epithet designates a personal name of a dedicant of the votive monument from Asia Minor, on which the epithet is confirmed, *CMRDM* III: 76.

[1147] Perhaps the allusion to the river Gallos, to Gallatians and to the sacred priests of the goddess Cybele / Magna Mater, galli, Ibid: 73.

[1148] On only one votive monument discovered in Dacia, the god is respected as Mēn *Άνείκητος*. Since this epithet usually appeared with the names of dii militares and it isn't characteristic for god Mēn, it could be that the epithet was attributed by a dedicant who was a soldier, under the influence of other Oriental military deities, like Mithras or Jupiter Dolichenus, Ibid: 78.

[1149] The epithet Φωσφόρος indicates the lunar dimension of the god, as the epithet ούράνιος implicates his celestial character. The epithet έπιφανής alludes to the belief that god's adherents communicate directly with him and is characteristic for other Asia Minor gods, like Sabazius, but also for the Egyptian god Serapis, Ibid: 78-79.

[1150] The epithet is, beside being known from epigraphic monuments, attested on the coins of Nysa and perhaps derived from the Arabian word 'gamar' which translates 'moon' or the word kamara (καμάρα), which translated 'grave, necropolis'. In both cases the chthonian context is clear, since on the coins of Nysa, chthonian deities like Hades were presented, which would imply that under this epithet god Mēn was venerated as a chthonian deity, Ibid: 75.

monuments from Maeonia show that he was considered an iatric god too, since pleas for healing and health were addressed to him.[1151] The epithet *Italikos* confirmed on a votive monument from the locality of Avdan, in E. N. Lane's opinion, implied the Roman wish to emphasise the association between them and their Anatolian origin.[1152] From all this richness of the god's epithets, it can be concluded that Mēn was worshipped as the supreme lord of the mundane life and the Afterlife, the master of Nature, plants and animals, but also as a chthonic deity *par excellence*. His chthonian character is attested on funerary monuments from Lydia, where the god was appealed to as a protector and guardian of the graves. From the content of the inscriptions we learn that after a certain deceased is buried, a plea is addressed to Mēn to guard the grave from any harm and anyone who tries to be buried in that grave without permission, or anyone who tries to sell or buy the grave in question. If someone breaks any of these 'rules', the god's rage will be roused.

The Anatolian deity also appears frequently on so-called confession inscriptions from Maeonia, in which the dedicant usually calls the god to punish a sinner.[1153] The confession inscriptions (also called reconciliation inscriptions) encompass around 150 religious texts dedicated to local Anatolian gods, with the majority of monuments known from Maeonia and Western Phrygia, dating from the 1st to the 3rd century.[1154] The two most important Asia Minor centres where the god was respected were Antioch in Pisidia and Kola in Maeonia. Epigraphic and archaeological monuments imply that the divinity had sanctuaries in different Asia Minor localities, such as Sardis, Nysa, Galatia, Julia, Prostanna, Burdur, Fassilar, Apollonia Pisidiae, Sillyon, etc.[1155] Two sanctuaries dedicated to Mēn existed in Antioch – one in the town itself and another near the town.[1156] As late as in the 1st century, the cult of the god started to spread from Asia Minor to Greece and later Rome, which is verified by the coins from Asia Minor issued during the reign of Augustus, but also the earliest inscription dedicated to the deity with the epithet Kamareites, from 66-67, discovered in the locality of Görnevit in the area of Kula.[1157] However, it is indisputable that Mēn's cult was known in Greece since the early 4th or late 3rd century BC, which is confirmed with a votive monument from Piraeus dated to the mentioned period.[1158] Also, the god's monuments are known from Delos, Thassos and Rhodes and, from the 2nd century BC, a relief is known (found in Athens) on which Mēn is presented with the god Pan and Nymph.[1159] Although the cult of the god spread intensively from the time of Augustus, he was already shown in coins of Galba in Antioch. But the true significance of the god's cult can be observed on the series of Antoninus Pius' coins, also from Antioch, where, on the obverse, the Roman emperor is presented, while on the reverse the god Mēn is shown with different attributes.[1160] The deity continued to appear on the coins of Antioch during the reign of later Roman emperors like Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Elagabalus and Gordian III. He was presented variously on the reverse of the coins - holding a rooster, with the figure of the goddess Nike, with a pine cone and bucranium, sometimes wearing a starry hat, and sometimes in the company of the goddess Tyche.[1161] The reason for such favouring of the god was the more than popular cult of the divinity in Antioch, where already before the reign of Antoninus Pius, the cult of Mēn was well liked. The divinity was shown as a patron of Antioch and the protector of the family, primarily by his clergy, which even financed festivities held in honour of the god during the 2nd and the 3rd century.[1162] His epithet Patrios very frequently presented on honorary inscriptions that recorded celebrations like the games held in honour of the deity, served to emphasise the fact that Mēn was a 'god of dedicants' fathers', that is, a god with a long tradition contrary to the new religion of Christianity, which spread very quickly in Asia Minor.[1163] That Mēn represented a deity who was a protector of athletes, even in Rome, is attested by a votive monument with a dedication in Greek by a certain Nicetas, the winner of an athletic contest in the names of Helios, Mēn and Selena.[1164] A particular role in Mēn's cult in the Imperial period was given to 'messengers', whose function was to mediate between

[1151] Perdrizet 1896: 105-106.
[1152] Lane 1975: 235-239.
[1153] For example *CMRDM* 1971: num. 44; For the confession inscriptions from Maeonia see Ricl 1995: 145 and further.
[1154] In confession inscriptions a short narrative addressed to deity in question plays a central role on the basis of sin and punishment for that sin, Paz de Hoz 2009: 357-367.
[1155] *CMRDM* III: 44.
[1156] Strabo mentions a sanctuary in Antioch dedicated to Mēn Askanios, Pedrizet 1895: 64. The only fully investigated temple of the god is actually the sanctuary in the vicinity of Anthioch, Lane 1990: 2166.
[1157] The earliest inscription was found as spolia, built in the outer wall of a house in Görnevit. It is a marble fragment which bears an inscription dedicated to Mēn Kamareites (god's name known from coins of Nysa), *CMRDM* I: num. 56.
[1158] Dedicants of the monument are a woman and a man, who were probably either foreigners or freedman and freedwoman, Perdrizet 1896: 75.
[1159] Marble relief found in Athens shows Pan with a syrinx, Nymph and in the middle of the scene god Mēn in a tunic and with a cloak, with a crescent on his shoulders. The god holds a spear in his right hand, while in his left he holds a rooster, Ibid: 77.
[1160] An interesting detail on Antoninus Pius' coins is the name of the god which is inscribed as *mensis.* The divinity holds the figure of goddess Nike, bucranium, rooster etc., *CMRDM* II: 90-91.
[1161] Ibid: 92- 96, num. 29-40, 99-103, num. 46-56.
[1162] The games held in Antioch in the name of god Mēn encompassed not only gymnastic contests but also other contests like for example a contest of trumpeters. The winner of the contest would get a reward in money, *CMRDM* III: 64.
[1163] Anderson 1913: 287.
[1164] *CIL* VI, 520. Nicetas was a prophet of mentioned contests, but also a member of an association that worshipped god Hercules known as a patron of athletic contests, Palmer 1978: 1109-1110.

The bust of god Mēn
(https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/22/Bust_of_M%C3%AAn%2C_the_Moon_God%2C_a_god_worshipped_in_the_western_interior_parts_of_Anatolia%2C_he_is_shown_with_a_crescent_like_open_horns_on_his_shoulders%2C_Roman_period%2C_Museum_of_Anatolian_Civilizations%2C_Ankara_%28264388852956%29.jpg)

The terracotta of god Mēn riding a horse
(https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/287444)

the god and his worshippers, with an obvious priestly presence in the background of those references.[1165]

The imagery of the god Mēn shows the divinity as a young man in a standing position, wearing an Oriental garment with a cloak, a Phrygian hat on the head and a crescent on his shoulders. The motif of a crescent most frequently confirms that certain iconographic presentations where only the crescent is shown, actually represent the god Mēn, whose substitute on votive and funerary monuments was the mentioned motif.[1166] Somewhat rarer are the presentations of the deity riding a horse, ram, panther, lion or chicken.[1167] Also, the presentations of the god seated are rare and so far only known from coins of the town of Gangre, from a statue of the god found in Lydia and from a statue of the divinity represented as a baby.[1168] The

[1165] The presence of angelos, god's messenger was attested in two confession texts in votive monuments. Their intervention was directed to the strengthening of god's cult, but also of the priest's position. N. Belayche suggests that angelos could have been a supernatural figure shaped after a Hermes model, who was sent from god Mēn to worshippers to give them his orders, but angelos could have also been a designation of the deity itself (based on the inscriptions when the worshipper experiences the presence of god), Belayche 2013: 132-134. Within more than 150 confession inscriptions, angeloi are mentioned only in two texts and revising the opinions of M. Ricl, A. A. R. Sheppard and S. Mitchell about the angel's role of subordinate and mediator between deities and humans, N. Belayche suggests that angeloi were personalized expression of homage to the deity's power and potential (*dunamis*), Belayche 2013a: 250-251.

[1166] *CMRDM* III: 61. On votive and funerary monuments, the motif of crescent represents a substitute of god Mēn and most frequently is shown inside the gable or above the inscription field (sometimes inside it as well). The motif of a crescent in the context of god's cult symbolizes dedicant's belief that his soul will continue its life in astral spheres, Cumont 1942: 244-246. For the motif of a crescent on Asia Minor votive and funerary monuments in the context of god Mēn, see *CMRDM* IV.

[1167] On reliefs, statues and coins, god Mēn is presented riding some of the mentioned animals or in the riding position. On many Asia Minor localities this iconographic type is confirmed, but on the coins of Laodicea an unusual variant of presentations is shown, where the deity stands holding a horse for a bridle. Three Attic presentations show Mēn riding a ram, on Attic terracotta god is riding a panther, on two Attic monuments and coins of Nysa and Prostanna, the deity is flanked with lions, while on one Attic relief he rides a chicken, *CMRDM* III: 99-102.

[1168] *CMRDM* III: 99.

usual attributes of Mēn are a chicken or rooster, a bucranium, a pine cone, a panther, a pedum, a wreath, sometimes grapes and an anchor.[1169] The chicken (hen or rooster) was obviously a sacrificial animal in the god's cult, but also an important iconographic motif, since it is represented quite often in scenes where Mēn is holding a chicken or, like in the coins of the town of Prostanna, where the chickens are presented beside the god's head.[1170] The motif of a wreath was depicted on two funerary monuments from Lydia and 12 votive monuments from Antioch and, since the wreath is always tied with a ribbon and surrounding a crescent, it does not have a funerary connotation but symbolises a victory.[1171] The presentations of Mēn as a river deity refer to the god's aspect of fertility, attested with images of Mēn and the river god Hermus on the reverse of Sardis' coins.[1172] The Anatolian deity was frequently presented with the hypostasis of Mother Goddess, like in the votive monument from Lydia on which the dedicant really considers the goddess as the mother of the god Mēn.[1173] Thus, Mēn joined the circle of Asia Minor gods close to the goddess, as Attis and Sabazius were. In epigraphic monuments, vows are frequently made to Mēn with Artemis Anaitis, who was closer to Artemis of Ephesus than to Cybele/Magna Mater.[1174] The god is also mentioned with Demeter and Hecate. The link between the two deities can be explained by their mutual aspect of fertility and, perhaps, by the fact that Demeter was often equated with Cybele/Magna Mater. The association of Mēn with Hecate, a chthonian goddess, is equally easily explained by their mutual chthonian aspect (Mēn katahtonios). The god was frequently associated or presented with the gods Zeus, Dionysus and Sabazius, but also Hermes, because of the chthonian dimension they shared. Also, like Hermes, Mēn was an intermediary between men and the gods, the one who protected the souls of the dead and cared for them in the Afterlife. The confirmed syncretism between the gods Attis and Mēn was already mentioned in well known inscriptions from the 4th century, found in Rome and dedicated to *Attis Menotyrannus*. This syncretism is mentioned in the teachings of Naaseenes too, where Attis, in his lunar capacity, is equated with the god Mēn.[1175] The association of the two gods is easy to understand – their dual nature that linked them both to the celestial realm and the Underworld made them close in their functions as well, of gods who protected the dead and took care of their souls in the Afterlife.

Little is known about the cult practices and clergy of the god. Epigraphic monuments attest the presence of his priests in Eumenea, Andeda, Anaboura, Ormeleis, etc. The priests were involved in the offering of stelae erected in the courtyards of Mēn's sanctuaries and profiting from fines which were proscribed by divine verdicts. The function was obviously hereditary, which is proved by a votive monument from Anaboura honouring the hereditary priest of Mēn Askaenos, and with the votive altar from the locality of Ormeleis, where Apollonius was a hereditary priest of the god Mēn.[1176] From votive monuments discovered in Antioch, we learn about Gaius Ulpius Baebianus, a hereditary priest of the god Mēn and the goddess Demeter, but also a pontifex and patron of the colonia of Antioch.[1177] What can be concluded from epigraphic material is that the position of the deity's priest was a hereditary one, and that his priests were wealthy and influential persons in their communities, sometimes even expressing their power as excessively tyrannical, which is implied by the god's epithet *tyrannos* and riots of angry worshippers against priests.[1178] The term *Μηναγύρτης*, which some scholars thought to be the name of Mēn's priests, was mentioned by Menander and his contemporary Antiphanus in the context of Asia Minor priests, which led to the possibly wrong conclusion that it was the term for designating priests of the god Mēn.[1179] However, the term probably related to *metragyrtes,* priests of Magna Mater, who were confirmed in the 4th century in Athens.[1180]

Like most pagan cults, the cult of the god Mēn disappeared in the 4th century. However, P. Perdrizet constates the vows to the deity on Asia Minor monuments during the 4th century, which contained a plea for better health and Mēn's protection from all evil and misfortune.

[1169] The grapes imply the primordial aspect of the god as the deity of fertility and vegetation, although it could also imply the connection with the god Dionysus. On the coins of town Ancyra, Men is shown with the anchor, the symbol of the city, while on the coins of the town Olbasa he is shown riding and carrying a large shield, *CMRDM* III: 46, 100.

[1170] Chicken, cock and hen are shown in the iconography of god Mēn not only in the mentioned way, but also below the table spread with offerings on monuments from Athens (a stele in the Lanckoronski collection) and a relief from Thoricus, Levick 1971: 81.

[1171] Presentations of goddess Nike holding a wreath are known from the coins of Antioch dated to the Republican period. Considering the motif of a wreath on votive monuments of god Mēn, E. N. Lane wonders whether they present the victory of god or the victory of a dedicant and what kind of victory (victory over the evil, sin or perhaps death), *CMRDM* III: 83.

[1172] Mēn is mentioned as a rain-god in the Attic inscription and his connection with rivers is continuously confirmed in Lydia, Ibid: 107.

[1173] Ibid: 81.

[1174] On the coins from the locality Saittae (vicinity of Kula), the deity is presented standing beside the goddess of a very similar appearance as Cybele / Magna Mater, Ibid: 83.

[1175] Turcan 1996: 68; Lancellotti 2002: 136.

[1176] *CMRDM* III: 49.

[1177] Ibid: 65.

[1178] The acts of disobedience or sacrilege directed towards the god's priests and sanctuaries are known from the territory of Asia Minor – a riot against a sanctuary of Mēn Motylleites, for example, in which sacred images of the deities were damaged, Belayche 2013: 129.

[1179] Ibid: 110.

[1180] E. N. Lane explains the difference between the forms menagyrt and metragyrt with *lapsus calami* made while translating Late Antique writers, Lane 1997: 66.

7.2. The Cult of the god Mēn in the Central Balkans

The cult of Anatolian god Mēn is, in the territory of the Central Balkans Roman provinces, attested with only two finds, both being bronze statuettes representing the deity.

A bronze statuette discovered in Viminacium represents the god as a young rider, in a standing position with open legs and slightly forward knees (cat. 1).[1181] He is dressed in a tunic with a cloak over his back, buttoned on the left shoulder on which, under the god's long hair, a part of a crescent is visible. Between Mēn's legs, traces of the figure having been fixed on the back of an animal are noticeable and, judging by them, the divinity was riding either a ram or a horse.[1182] Since both of the god's forearms are missing, the attributes that he presumably held can be only supposed. The modelling of the god's head, facial features and hair imply the coarse work of a provincial artisan. As I have already mentioned, the animal that the divinity usually rides is a horse, therefore, we can assume that in the Viminacium statuette he was presented that way. I do not know of any direct iconographic analogies, particularly because on bronze statuettes the god is shown as a standing young man with a spear in one hand and a patera in the other.[1183] However, as the closest analogies in the context of iconography, I find that a statuette from the Sackler Museum and a statuette from the Museum in Burdur, on which Mēn is presented riding a horse, have to be mentioned.[1184] A very similar iconography can be observed in a marble relief from Boston, also discovered in Burdur.[1185] The exact context of finding the statuette is not known, but it was discovered outside a military camp, which would suggest that its owner was of Oriental or Greek origin, who kept the statuette inside a private shrine, venerating the god in the privacy of his house, probably during the 2nd or the 3rd century.

The second bronze statuette of the god Mēn actually represents a syncretistic figure of Mēn-Somnus, found in the locality of Obrenovac (cat. 2).[1186] A youth is presented flying, with a contrapposto form and his left leg placed on a globe. His right leg is thrown back in the air. The young man has a Phrygian hat on his head, whose ends fall on his shoulders, while his curly hair is knotted above his forehead. In his left hand the traces of the attribute he held can be seen, as in his right extended hand. It can be presumed that he held a bag, torch or a ryton.[1187] On his back, small wings are presented. The details of the statuette, like his hat, facial features, body shape and the proportionality of the figure all imply the very solid work of a provincial artisan. The posture of Mēn-Somnus is copied from the posture of the winged Erotes, while the syncretism of the two deities is best observed in the element of the Phrygian hat, characteristic for the god Mēn and the wings (and the ryton, if it was, indeed, an attribute presented on the Obrenovac statuette), typical for known images of Somnus.[1188] The syncretism of the two gods probably originated from their mutual role as chthonic divinities, guardians of the souls of the dead, that is a *psychopomps*.[1189] Analogies can be found in a bronze statuette from Cambridge, but also in a relief from the Museum in Izmit.[1190] The stylistic characteristics of the Mēn-Somnus statuette suggest that it was a skilfully modelled work of a provincial artisan, dating to the 2nd or the 3rd century.

Since we do not possess any information regarding the context of finding of either statuettes of the god Mēn, we can only presume the connotations they had for their owners. The statuette of Mēn found in Viminacium, presenting the god in a riding posture, shows the usual imagery of the divinity. Since it was found outside a military camp, it can be presumed that it was the private property of a person of Asia Minor or Greek origin, who held a statuette in his private shrine,

[1181] Antička bronza u Jugoslaviji 1969: 100, cat. 132.

[1182] The presentations of Mēn riding a horse are known from the coins of Asia Minor towns or relief presentations from Asia Minor. Since this type of god's presentations doesn't appear among the oldest Attic reliefs of the god, P. Perdrizet wonders whether they belong to a later period or perhaps the iconography originated from the syncretism of Mēn with other Asia Minor deities, Perdrizet 1896: 105. The presentations of god riding a ram are not frequent and are known only from several monuments, *CMRDM* III: 101.

[1183] Presentations of Mēn standing and holding a sceptre and patera are numerous, Vollkommer 1992, 464, num. 24-32. Beside this basic iconographic type of standing deity with mentioned attributes, other presentations of Mēn are known, where the deity holds: a sceptre and a pine cone, Ibid: 464-465, num. 33-41; sceptre and an anchor, Ibid: 465, num. 42; sceptre and grapes, Ibid: 465, num. 43; patera and thyrsus, Ibid: 465, num. 44; cornucopia and sceptre, Ibid: 465, num. 45.

[1184] Ibid: 468, num. 99, 104.

[1185] Ibid: 468, num. 96.

[1186] Antička bronza u Jugoslaviji 1969: 98, num. 122; Tadin 1979: 24, num. 45.

[1187] Tadin 1979: num. 24, fig. 45.

[1188] Somnus, Roman equivalent of Greek Hypnos, was a personification of sleep, usually presented as winged youth with a horn and a poppy in his hands. He brought sleep and rest to people, which is the reason for his often presented image on mosaics and sarcophagi. Sometimes, instead of the wings on his back, he has wings in his hair; Cumont 1942: 412, fig. 84.

[1189] A chthonian aspect of god Mēn is attested by numerous presentations of the god with Hecate, Hermes, Demeter, *CMRDM* III: 84-87. The epithets of the god like *Katachthonios* clearly imply his role as the guardian of the deceased's tomb, Lane 1990: 2165. On the other side, Plutarch's words that god Hypnos makes mortals sleep forever, takes care of them and their souls on their way to immortality, confirm that god was a psychopompos, Cumont 1942: 368. P. Boyancé also discusses the role of Hypnos as psychopompos and interprets Philo's words that the dream is like the teaching of death, like a shadow and like life after death, as he also discusses the opinion of Jewish philosopher that Hypnos is the one who brings death, but also certain awakening in the Afterlife, Boyancé 1973: 311. As the explicit presentation of Somnus as a psychopompos, P. Boyancé quotes a fresco from the tomb of Nasonii, in which central part, a winged Hypnos is presented with poppies and turned downwards torch. The figures of winged Erotes and other imagery presented on the fresco also contain a chthonian dimension and underline the obvious function of Hypnos as a psychopompos, Boyancé 1973: 314-314.

[1190] Vollkommer 1992: 466, num. 65, 470, num. 128.

venerating the god as his protector and guardian. The presence of an Asia Minor lunar god in Viminacium is not surprising because it was a large urban centre and, as the capital of Moesia Superior, it attracted, with its favourable geographic position, many settlers of different origin, professions and social class.

Votive monuments of Asia Minor provenience dedicated to Mēn were mostly erected by his loyal adherents, like freedmen and slaves. However, in more urban centres like Antioch, for example, the god's worshippers also included very wealthy and important members of the community, which confirms the respect of the god's cult in the higher Roman circles.[1191] The professions of Mēn's dedicants are rarely mentioned, therefore, we can only assume that the owner of the god's statuette from Viminacium was, perhaps, a merchant, craftsman or something similar.

The statuette from Obrenovac of Mēn-Somnus is a syncretic presentation of two deities of chthonian character, therefore, it seems that its symbolism is quite clear. It is very possible that the statuette was used as a grave good and presented a belief of the deceased in his rebirth and eternal life, since both Mēn and the god Somnus were not only chthonian deities, but also psychopomps who led the souls of the dead to their final place of rest. Here, however, two possible aspects under which the god Mēn could have been respected in the Central Balkans territory should be mentioned. In scholarly literature, the hypothesis exists that the motif of a crescent present on funerary monuments or sarcophagi should be interpreted as an apotropaic motif that carries the symbolism of the protection of the deceased by the deity in question.[1192] We know from ancient writers that teachings and beliefs, like Pythagoreans', about the moon as a symbol of immortality in Rome, had their followers from the upper class, but funerary monuments from throughout the Roman Empire attest that this belief was not restricted only to the wealthy and respected members of the community, but was also spread among all social classes in the Roman provinces.[1193] Therefore, the lunar symbolism of the god Mēn could also contain an apotropaic aspect of the deity, but at the same time allude to immortality after death.

In that context, motifs of a crescent known from certain funerary monuments from Roman Central Balkan localities should be mentioned. In his analysis of the traces of Mēn's cult in the province of Dalmatia,[1194] J. Medini also touched on the subject of funerary monuments from the southern parts of the Central Balkans with the motif of crescent on them, sometimes combined with an image of a pine cone, rosette or disc.[1195] In the author's opinion, particularly significant monuments are those from the localities of Kavadar and Popadija, on which both motifs of the crescent and the pine cone (sometimes a pine tree), which are Mēn's attributes *par excellence*, are confirmed and, thus, could represent iconographic substitutes of the god.[1196] Following this hypothesis, the next logical conclusion would be that the cult of Mēn was known and venerated in the area of Kavadar and Popadija. However, the god's cult is not attested either epigraphically or archaeologically, nor are there any onomastic elements that would imply an Oriental origin of the dedicants who erected funerary monuments in the mentioned localities. N. Proeva suggests that, perhaps, in the motif of the crescent, the symbolism of the goddess Selene should be observed, whose name is known as the name of the deceased from a funerary monument in the village of Martolci, on which two crescents are presented in the gable.[1197] However, the cult of Mēn could be confirmed on the funerary monument from the village of Krušica, where, above the inscription field, a high votive altar with a crescent above it is presented (with the motifs of arrows and a snake on the side).[1198] The name of the dedicant, Moma, on the Krušice monument is known from one other monument in the village of Bela Crkva, in the context of indigenous names, therefore, it is quite impossible to surmise whether Moma was an indigenous resident or an immigrant from Asia Minor. The monument from Krušice was also discussed in an article by A. Jovanović, who thinks that a motif of a crescent presented above a votive altar could indicate the sublimation of a certain lunar deity, such as Luna, Diana, Hecate or Mēn.[1199] Considering all this, I think that Mēn's motif of a crescent in the context of the god's cult on the funerary monument from Krušica could be presumed, further argumented by analogous monuments, mostly of Asia Minor provenience (particularly a stele from Antioch), where the motif of a crescent is shown above the votive altar, accompanied by an inscription in which a vow is made to the god Mēn.[1200] However,

[1191] *CMRDM* III: 109-113.
[1192] Lunais 1979: 87.
[1193] Cumont 1942: 252.
[1194] A votive altar dedicated to god Mēn Askaenos from Omiš, antique Oneum in province Dalmatia, which is unfortunately lost, is in J. Medini's opinion actually addressed to several aspects of the god and thus is addressed to him in the plural. (*Dii Askaeni*). In the inscription the dedication is also made to the syncretistic deity Magna Mater-Diana under the same aspect which has Mēn too, judging by the inscription – cosmic and lunar aspect, Medini 1987: 175-179.
[1195] Medini 1987: 176-180; *CMRDM* III: 54, 79.
[1196] Medini 1987: 184.
[1197] Proeva 1992: 110.
[1198] The funerary monument from village Krušice represents a monument with a profiled inscription field above which an altar is presented with a crescent above it. The monument is a product of a local workshop, dated to the 2nd or 3rd century, Ibid: 38-39; Јовановић 2005: 513.
[1199] Јовановић 2005: 513-516.
[1200] The analogous iconographical examples to the iconography presented on a funerary monument from Krušice are known from a stele from the area of Kula, stele from Ayazviran, altar from Söpüren,

since we have no epigraphic confirmation of the god's cult in the whole territory of the Central Balkans, the mentioned opinion should stay within the boundaries of a hypothesis. No altar or sacred area of Mēn has been attested in the Central Balkans territory either, as it has been in neighbouring Dacia in colonia Sarmizegetusa, where an altar dedicated to the god was found in the area where two Syrian sanctuaries (and south-east of them a Mithraeum was identified) were discovered.[1201]

area of Eskişehir, a small stele from the area of Julia-Ipsus (now in the museum of Afyon Karahissar), a stele from Antioch, *CMRDM* I: 30, num. 47, 32, num. 50, 61, num. 93, 74, num. 114, 146, num. 270.

[1201] God Mēn has been attested in epigraphic monuments and bronze statuettes in Dacia, while a particular form of Mēn Cilvastianus has been confirmed on a votive monument dedicated to god by Gaius Petronius Iustus, *cornicularius procuratoris*, Szabó 2018: 96, ft. 1101.

8. Artemis of Ephesus

8.1. The Cult of Artemis of Ephesus in Graeco-Roman culture

The goddess Artemis of Ephesus (*Αρτεμις Εφεσία*), known also as Diana of Ephesus, was a supreme deity of the city of Ephesus. Before the Greeks took over her cult, she was a local Asia Minor goddess who was more similar to Near-Eastern and Egyptian goddesses than to the Greek Artemis.[1202] In the earliest period of goddess's cult, presumably from the end of the 10th century BC, she was an unknown goddess, venerated as the mother of Ephesus, which was later, upon the arrival of the Greeks, equated with the Greek goddess Artemis.[1203] During the whole period of Antiquity, in the context of the city of Ephesus, from the 5th century BC to the 4th century, the cult of the goddess ruled the political, economic, cultural and religious life of the city.[1204] Therefore, it is not surprising that her cult spread very fast through the Roman Empire, upon the first contact with the Greeks and later the Romans, and that it found its way to a large number of followers.[1205]Diodorus Siculus mentions that Persians paid great respect to the goddess and her mysteries and it is possible that Persian culture and religion influenced the cult of the Ephesian Artemis and the institution of her priests known as *μεγάβυζος, μεγάβυζου.*[1206]Pausanias writes that the Ephesian Artemis' popularity can be explained by the monumentality of her temple Artemision, the distinguished reputation of the city and the goddess' fame.[1207]

The myth of Artemis of Ephesus is almost identical to the myth of the Greek goddess Artemis – she was a daughter of Zeus and Leto, who was born one day before her brother Apollo in a groove of trees named Ortygia. This detail is very important in the mythology of Artemis of Ephesus, because, as Strabo agrees, near Ephesus, a place by the name Ortygia really existed, which Ephesians though represented the mythical place of the goddess' birth.[1208] Those beliefs are confirmed by Tacitus too, who mentions Ortygia as the place of Artemis' and Apollo's birth.[1209] The close relationship between the two myths of Greek Artemis and Ephesus' Artemis left its trace on epigraphic monuments on which the Ephesian Artemis is called a daughter of Zeus. The two goddesses also shared one other detail – the same date of birth in late April or, more probably, early May (on the sixth day of Thargelion).[1210] Here, however, the similarities between the two goddess end – in mythology, the Greek Artemis is a virgin and primarily a goddess of the hunt and woods, who punishes with death all who dare to offend her or the gods of Olympus. The Ephesian Artemis was a kind and emphatic nurturing goddess related to orgiastic festivities and eunuch priests, while iconographically, unlike her Greek namesake, who was always presented as a chaste and dressed woman, she was shown with multiple round-shaped pendants on her chest, which gave rise to numerous debates in scholarly literature.

The epithets of the Ephesian Artemis designate the primary aspects under which the goddess was venerated. In the first place, she was Propilaia, a goddess with a mural crown, protectress of the city walls, the city entrance, the city itself and its residents – she fearlessly protected them all from enemies and misfortune.[1211] For young girls, she was *παρθένος* and all virgins in Ephesus were under her protection.[1212] Strabo writes that Artemis of Ephesus was also the protectress of young men, who had a collegium in charge of the

[1202] The cult of Artemis of Ephesus can be traced to the Bronze Age, if not earlier, Lesser 2005-2006: 43.

[1203] Two different theories, present in scholarly literature, can be distinguished in the context of the question of the Ephesian goddess' origin: first theory claims that the deity was an unknown local goddess of Ephesus, whose cult was similar to the cult of Asia Minor' Mother goddess, who was upon the arrival of Greeks equated with the Greek goddess Artemis. The archaeological excavations of Artemision confirmed that in the earliest period of the temple's existence, it was dedicated to the cult of Mother Goddess, Arnold 1989: 26. The second theory is similar, with a slight difference that when Greeks colonized Ephesus, they overtook the cult of the local Mother goddess and named her Artemis, thus forming a new deity – Artemis of Ephesus, Oster 1999: 1699.

[1204] Strelan 1996: 44.

[1205] Strabo writes that the goddess addressed to certain Aristarche in her sleep and ordered her to sail with the Phocaeans to Massilia to found a colony there and take goddess's sacred images to establish a temple of Ephesian Artemis, once the colony is founded, Strabo, *Geography,* IV. 1. 4. The cult image of the supreme deity of Ephesus became one of the most reproduced cult images in terracottas, figurines, gems etc.

[1206] A good example of Persian enormous respect for the goddess can be observed in the event when Xerxes looted all Ionian temples, except the sanctuary of the goddess in Ephesus, Strelan 1996: 42.

[1207] Pausanias, *Description of Greece,* 4.31.8.

[1208] Strabo, *Geography,* XIV. 1. 22;

[1209] Tacitus, *Annals,* III. 61.

[1210] Thargelia was one of the most important Greek festivals (characteristic for Ionians and Athenians), celebrated in honour of gods Apollo and Artemis, Oster 1990; 1707-1708; Rogers 2012: 3.

[1211] Strelan 1996: 47-48.

[1212] In 'Leucippe and Clitophon' by Achilles Tatius from the 2nd century, young girl Leucippe keeps her chastity thanks to the help of the Ephesian goddess. Girls marked their transit to maidenhood by running to the Artemision and 'hanging' on the deity's statue, which could symbolically allude to the myth of Dionysus who runs for Amazons, from whom some found a shelter in the temple of Artemis of Ephesus, Strelan 1996: 49.

organisation of the festivities in honour of goddess's birth in Ortygia.[1213] Therefore, it is understandable why the goddess had the epithet *kourotrophos*, as the deity who overlooks and protects all young persons until their transition into adulthood. Artemis of Ephesus was also associated with brides and marriage – an inscription from Cyrene prescribes rites for brides and pregnant women in the Artemision.[1214] The Asia Minor goddess is also called *Σωτήιρα* on many votive monuments, erected by parents for the health and protection of their children, therefore, like Cybele/Magna Mater, the goddess was the protectress of children, but also a goddess who helped women during labour. Her epithet *επηκοός* already attributed to other Asia Minor deities, confirms the direct contact between the goddess and her worshippers and alludes to the fact that she carefully listened to their prayers and wishes.[1215] Sailors and merchants venerated Ephesian Artemis as their protectress and the one who brought them success on their travels and in their tasks.[1216] The goddess was also *επιφανεία*, in Caracalla's words 'the most powerful from all the deities in their epiphanies'.[1217] Epigraphic and archaeological monuments testify that Artemis of Ephesus was respected in Ephesus as a chthonian goddess,[1218] but also a lunar (celestial) deity, because of the motifs of a torch, veil (in shape of a halo around her head), and the Sun and Moon on relief presentations of the goddess.[1219] The motifs of the Sun, stars or torch are very frequently shown on Ephesus coins as well. The adherents of the goddess considered her a mistress of the Underworld and the one who held power over the demons of the dead and the demons of Nature.[1220] She was also connected to magic and magic rituals, which is implied by the Ephesian magic letters known as *Ephesia Grammata,* written on the feet, belt or the crown of the goddess' sculptures and statues.[1221] Bearing in mind the link between the Ephesian Artemis and magic, it is quite strange that she was not presented on magic amulets. Analogous to Cybele/Magna Mater, Artemis of Ephesus had a variety of different aspects and functions, which are indicated by her other epithets – she was a queen of the cosmos, the Mistress and a celestial deity. In short, she was a protectress of people, plants, animals, but also a saviour and guardian against all evils and enemies, the protectress of the family (particularly the young) and a factor in the political and social stability of Ephesus. Her cult was not limited only to Ephesus - Strabo writes about her cult being known in Carthage and it can be presumed that the goddess was venerated

The sculpture of Artemis of Ephesus from the Prytaneion of Ephesus (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Artemis_of_Ephesus.jpg)

[1213] Strabo, *Geography,* XIV. 1. 20.

[1214] The inscription discovered in Cyrene contains several rules considering sacrifices of a bride to goddess Artemis of Ephesus, before she shares a roof with her husband. Also, rules for pregnant women are quoted, again with expressing respect and making sacrifices in honour of the Ephesian goddess, Shepard Kremer 2004: 17.

[1215] Oster 1990: 1723.

[1216] Strelan 1996: 63.

[1217] Burrell 2004: 75.

[1218] On Lydian funerary monuments, from the 6th century BC, goddess Artemis of Ephesus paired with Lydian god Apollo is named a 'guardian of tombs', Munn 2006: 166-167.

[1219] Epigraphical monuments reveal that Artemis of Ephesus was the one who carries the torch, *λαμπάσι πυρφόροις*, as she is represented on Ephesian coins issued between 159 and 133 BC, where she is shown with a torch in her hand, Strelan 1996: 47.

[1220] Ephesian Artemis was often equated with chthonian goddesses Hecate and Selene, Strabo states that a shrine to Hecate was placed in Artemision, Strabo *Geography,* XIV.1.23.

[1221] Ephesia grammata were magic letters or words written on amulets and scholars think that those letters or words were put in the bags carried around the neck on shoulders, from the 4th century BC. These letters and words actually symbolized the power and strength which are given to their owner, Strelan 1996: 87. On one of the discovered papyri with texts of magic rituals, Artemis, Hecate and Persephone are mentioned, as the goddesses of Underworld, who know magic letters and therefore possess the keys of Hades, thus gaining the authority over chthonian deities and demons, Arnold 1989: 24.

in Caesarea Maritima, Oenoanda and probably other Asia Minor centres.[1222]

The imagery of the Ephesian Artemis is also very indicative in the context of her various aspects and functions – the goddess was presented as a standing, mature woman (sometimes with open arms), wearing a mural crown on her head, sometimes a modius or kalathos.[1223] She is dressed in a long dress ornamented with protomes of animals' heads (ram, bull, lion, panther, sphinx or gryphon). Frequently presented motifs are bees and deer antlers, and flowers and plants.[1224] The bee was a particularly sacred symbol of the goddess', not only in her iconography, but also in the context of her priesthood and temple officials – Aeschylus writes about the 'bee keepers' who opened the temple's gates of the goddess's sanctuary, which could be an allusion to the deity's priestesses, while Pausanias states that the goddess' male officials were known as Essenes – King Bees.[1225] Connecting bees with the goddess' clergy could contain a connotation of chastity and pureness, because bees were believed to be pure and that they avoided those who are impure, but also could present an allusion to bees' relationship with fertility and vegetation. Artemis of Ephesus is often presented with zodiac signs around her neck or on her upper chest[1226] and Ephesian magic letters (Ephesia Grammata) on her feet, belt and crown.[1227]

The goddess is also shown with multiple round pendants that hang from her chest, which have represented a subject of discussion for many years in scholarly literature. R. Turcan thinks that a motif similar to female breasts did not exist in the earliest period of goddess' presentation in the form of a xoanon, but was added later to her iconographic presentations.[1228] L. R. LiDonnici's hypothesis is based on the opinion that the round pendants that hang on deity's breasts symbolised breasts in the context of the goddess' protective function over Ephesus and its residents and not in the context of the aspect of fertility.[1229] Certain authors suggested that the round pendants on the goddess' chest represented the hives of wild bees or bull's testicles, based on the hagiographical writing 'The Passion of Symphorianus', where it is described that Symphorianus burst out laughing when he saw the goddess' statue in Autun covered with testicles.[1230]And really - was the goddess presented with round pendants on her chest from the earliest period of her existence? I already mentioned that Strabo wrote about colonists from Ephesus who took the goddess' cult image to Massilia (today Marseille), upon their forming a colony there. The known finds of the goddess' statuettes and coins with her image from Marseille show that upon the establishment of the goddess' cult in the newly founded colony, and later too, Artemis of Ephesus was presented without round pendants on her body.[1231]

As one of the most powerful and important deities in Graeco-Roman culture, Artemis of Ephesus was frequently linked with another, just as significant Asia Minor goddess, Cybele/Magna Mater, with whom she shared various aspects, chief among which was that both divinities were mistresses of the mundane life and the Underworld.[1232] Besides Cybele/Magna Mater, the Ephesian Artemis was associated with Demeter, Hecate

[1222] Strabo, *Geography,* III. 4. 6; Oster 1990: 1703-1704.

[1223] As a cult statue of Magna Mater in Metroon on Palatine which had a black stone instead of a face, the first statues of Ephesian Artemis were modelled from wood which was painted in black, Turcan 1996: 254.

[1224] The bees were sacred insects of goddess Artemis, thus certain authors think that the priestesses of the Ephesian goddess were called *Melissae* (bees), like the priestesses of goddess Rhea (Cybele), Demeter etc. The motif of a bee appears on Ephesian coins from the 6th century BC, Ransome 1937: 58 and further. Some authors, like A. B. Cook believe that in the cult of Ephesian goddess, the bees represented a chthonian symbol, Cook 1895: 1-24; R. Turcan denies that the word *Melissae* was a synonym for goddess's priestesses, because it's nowhere confirmed, Turcan 1996: 254. On numerous and different presentations, the goddess Artemis of Ephesus is presented with a bee/bees or with deer/deers, Strelan 1996: 61.

[1225] Aesch. fr. 87; Pausanias, *Description of Greece,* VIII. 13. 1. A gold decorative pinhead in the shape of a bee was found together with three plaques composed of flowers or leaves and bees' bodies in the Artemision, dating to the 8th or the 7th century BC. Other cult objects connected to Ephesian Artemis, also contain an image of a bee, like gold plaques from Camirus in Rhodes, Rigoglioso 2010: 63.

[1226] The zodiac signs presented as a part of the goddess's ornaments refer to the seasons and the course of the year, Rogers 2012: 182.

[1227] This iconographic type of goddess' representations appears in the period between 159 and 133 C, on Ephesian coins. The author thinks that it originated from the custom of adoring the xoanon of the goddess with various votive objects and jewellery, Fleischer 1973: 39, 393-395. As I already mentioned, Ephesia Grammata or magic letters were according to Pausanias written on certain body parts of goddess's statues. However, they are not known from any archaeological monument of the divinity. On so-called 'Paris' papyrus, certain Ephesia Grammata are written, identical to the ones from the sceptre of Artemis-Selene, which could present an indirect proof that magic letters were written on the goddess's statues as well, Arnold 1989: 23.

[1228] Turcan 1996: 255.

[1229] L. R. LiDonnici thinks that the goddess's head, arms and feet always presented in a darker colour that the round-shaped pendants on her chest, imply that the pendants can't symbolize the breasts because if they did, they would be of the same colour. Also, if the round-shaped pendants were breasts, nipples would be presented, which are not. The author states that even if the pendants would present breasts, they wouldn't be an indication of goddess's aspect of fertility, because in the imagery of god Zeus Labraundos, the same round-shaped pendants are shown, but the god wasn't venerated as the fertility god, LiDonnici 1992: 389-415.

[1230] S. Skarmintzos thinks that breast-like pendants on the upper part of Ephesian Artemis body presented hives of the wild bees, Skarmintzos 2017: 269-272. Symphorianus was a 2nd century martyr who saw the statue of Artemis of Ephesus in Autun and commented that she was covered with testicles, Strelan 1996: 89; LiDonnici 1992: 393.

[1231] LiDonnici 1992: 400; Turcan 1996: 255.

[1232] Two goddesses were sometimes similarly even presented – sometimes the statue of Cybele was presented with round-shaped pendants as Artemis of Ephesus, as it is a case with a Cybele statue from Pergamon dated to the 2nd century and sometimes on Hellenistic coins, Ephesian Artemis is shown with lions like Cybele, Horsley 1992: 137-139.

and Selena, because of their mutual chthonian and celestial aspects.

Although various assumptions have been made in scholarly literature about the mysteries of Artemis Ephesus and different periods have been suggested as the beginning of the celebrations, there is no epigraphic, archaeological or literary evidence that the mysteries of the goddess had been celebrated before the middle of the 4th century BC in Ortygia, confirmed by a fragmentary decree of the Ephesian Gerousia, dated between 180 and 192. It is presumed that after 294 BC, Lysimachos rearranged the mysteries of Artemis in the context of a goddess of salvation, similar to other deities worshipped in mystery religions, which were now held not in Ortygia, but in Ephesus. Nevertheless, probably between 14 to 37, with the transfer of the Kouretes from the goddess' temple of Artemision to the new prytaneion, the Kouretes began to be in charge of symposia, mystery rituals and sacrifices in honour of the goddess, which is mentioned by Strabo (the Kouretes were young men who were about to transition into adulthood).[1233] The sacrifices comprised the burning of incense, libations, animal sacrifices, reading of their entrails, the giving of secret *symbola* to the initiates by a hierophant,[1234] and banquets. The goddess's devotees believed that the testicles of bulls sacrificed in the celebrations of the mysteries, empowered Ephesian Artemis to act as midwife for the birth of the bees associated with the souls of the initiates.[1235] In the 3rd century, the sacrifices performed during the mysteries were carried out not only in honour of the Ephesian goddess, but also on behalf of the Roman emperors.[1236] Strabo mentions the *neoi,* who were organised into a cult association, *thiasos,* at the end of the 1st century BC and held banquets during the festivities of the Ephesian Artemis. It is presumed that young men could join the *neoi* after completion of the *ephebeia* and could remain *neoi* until they were 50 years old. Epigraphic evidence attests that during the Imperial period, *neoi* had their gymnasia in some cities or shared gymnasia with other associations, they were in charge of preserving order among the members of the association, took care of tomb monuments, organised races and athletic games, etc.[1237] During Thargelion festivities, the *neoi* were, perhaps, initiated into the mysteries of the Ephesian Artemis.

Being the most important deity of Ephesus, the goddess enjoyed different festivities performed in her honour, which encompassed ceremonial procession, sacrifices, games and banquets. The first festivities of the year, Artemisia (*Αρτεμίσια*), were held during the month named after the goddess, Artemision (March-April) and consisted of athletic and theatre contests.[1238] The Ephesians took all the celebrations in Artemision very seriously, equating the high level of the festivals' performances with the high level of fame and prosperity that their city would obtain after the ceremonies. This is confirmed with the text from an epigraphic inscription dated to the period of Marcus Aurelius, from which we can conclude that Ephesus Boule was responsible for supervising the Artemisia and that any sacrilege committed during the festivities was unlawful and punishable.[1239] During the Artemisia, adolescents participated in the festivities and as, perhaps, future married couples, had the opportunity to get better acquainted, to follow the holy procession behind the chariot bearing the goddess' cult objects, placing torches, baskets and incense, dancing and singing hymns in honour of the goddess.[1240] The chariot with the deity's cult objects and other utensils used during ritual practices was followed by horses, dogs, and hunting and military assets. The holy procession actually symbolised Artemis' function as a hunting goddess, but also her dimension of a protectress of families and arranged marriages.[1241] Young virgin girls performed a holy dance inside the temple of the Ephesian Artemis, dancing like birds, probably imitating the gestures of quails.[1242] A very important festival of the goddess, celebrating her nativity, was held in the mentioned month of Thargelion (May-June) and it bore strong similarities with Magna Mater's festivities of Megalesia. The cult statue of the Ephesian Artemis was carried in a holy procession, like the sacred image of Magna Mater, through the whole city (from the goddess' temple through the Magnesian gate and further through the city, then to and into the Theatre and back through the Koressian gate to the goddess'

[1233] Strabo, *Geography,* XIV. 1. 20; Rogers 2012: 119.
[1234] Hierophant could be a hereditary function, for example the Mundicii were hierophants for at least four generations, Ibid: 186.
[1235] G. M. Rogers suggests that the pendants on the chest of Artemis of Ephesus' presentations represent the testicles of sacrificed bulls and that the initiation to the goddess's cult was symbolically presented in the birth of the bees as the birth of souls of the initiates (into the new life in a new religion), Rogers 2012: 119, Pl. 1.
[1236] Ibid: 92-93.
[1237] Ibid: 104-106.
[1238] The festivities included boxing and performing of comedies, Oster 1990: 1708.
[1239] Early as in the period of Claudius' reign, proconsul Paulus Fabius Persicus issued the list of rules which applied for the clergy and administratives of Artemision. Some of the rules were that for the tasks which are to be done inside and outside the temple, freedmen should be employed, cheaper purchase of children who would stay and later serve in the cult of the goddess should be permitted, and priests of the temple should be allowed to borrow money from sacred temple' fonds, Oster 1990: 1716.
[1240] A ritual procession of male and female adolescents was known as 'Daitis' festival and encompassed the dressing of the goddess's cult statue in new clothes and feeding her with a ritual meal of salt, Lesser 2005-2006: 49.
[1241] Strelan 1996: 59. Xenophon of Ephesus in 'Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes' writes about young girls and boys who participated in the festivities of the Ephesian goddess, as the festival was the opportunity to find husbands for the girls and wives for the young men, Shepard Kraemer 2004: 58.
[1242] Ibid: 61.

Temple of Ephesian Artemis, Hadrian and demos of Ephesus in Ephesus
(https://followinghadrian.com/2015/05/04/the-temple-of-hadrian-at-ephesus-ionia-turkey/)

temple).[1243] The custom of carrying the cult statue of the goddess in a holy procession was, in the opinion of some authors, only introduced from the period of Hadrian's reign and, as in the festival of Megalesia, the statue was ritually cleansed (bathed, oiled, perfumed, dressed and crowned) and then put on a litter that led the ceremonial procession.[1244] Callimachus adds that the Kouretes, dressed in military clothes, particularly added to the atmosphere during the festivities, with their dancing and stomping of feet around the goddess' statue.[1245] Strabo's testimony of the Kouretes holding symposia and dancing during the festivities refers to their protection of Leto while she was giving birth to Artemis and Apollo and to the association of the Ephesians with the Olympians. This reminder was present every year during the celebration of mysteries in honour of Artemis of Ephesus.[1246] Roman citizens were actively involved in the celebration of the mysteries and sometimes presented rich offerings to the goddess, like 31 gold and silver statues in the shape of the goddess, Emperor Trajan and his wife, given by Gaius Vibius Salutaris.[1247] The goddess' festivities were not only open to the citizens of Ephesus, but to residents from other towns as well.[1248] The worshippers of Artemis of Ephesus could celebrate her cult in the festivities which they organised and paid for, like, for example, the festivals of Balbilea (Barbilea) named after their founder Balbilus, a patron of Ephesus, who was permitted by Vespasian to organise these festivities in his birth town.[1249]

The temple of the Ephesian goddess, Artemision, was built in the 8th century BC and the cult statue of the deity which was placed in it was a xoanon of unknown iconography.[1250] Looted during a raid by the Cimmerians, the temple was rebuilt in the 7th century BC. In the 6th century BC, the sculptor Endoios modelled a new cult statue of the goddess, probably of abonos, presenting Artemis standing, with extended arms, in a long dress without any ornaments.[1251] Strabo states that the Artemision was situated beside a grove with different kinds of trees (an allusion to part of the Artemis myth, where Leto gave birth to the divine twins under the tree).[1252] Pausanias mentions that from the earliest days of Ephesus, Artemision was an asylum for the

[1243] The Ephesian coins from the 2nd century show the litter in which Ephesian Artemis' cult statue was carried in the holy procession, Oster 1990: 1710; Rogers 2012: 184-185.
[1244] Strelan 1996: 74.
[1245] The dance in the honour of Artemis of Ephesus reminded on the part of the goddess's myth in which kouretes drive away goddess Hera with their noise, Ibid: 62.
[1246] Rogers 2012: 122.
[1247] Ringwood Arnold 1972: 17-22; Rogers 2012: 184.
[1248] The influence of the goddess's cult spread far beyond the area of Ephesus – in more than 50 Asia Minor cities, coins with the goddess's image were issued. The cult of the Ephesian goddess was respected in Sardis, Smyrna, Heraclea Lincestys, Chios, Corinth, Megalopolis, on Aventine in Rome etc. Also, her cult is constated in the territory of Spain in several localities, Garcia Y Bellido 1967: 18-20.
[1249] Ringwood Arnold 1872: 17-22.
[1250] Pindar testifies that Amazons founded Artemision during their battle against Theseus, while Callimachus states that the queen of the Amazons, erected a statue to the goddess and performed a sacrifice, while other Amazons danced around the cult statue of the Ephesian Artemis, Bremmer 2008: 47.
[1251] The described statue of a sculptor Endoios is known from several coins of Lucius Hostilius Saserna, from the 1st century BC, where the statue of the Ephesian goddess that was presented was a statue from Massilia (by Strabo, a copy of Endoios' sculpture from Ephesus), LiDonnici 1992: 399-400.
[1252] Strabo, *Geography,* XIV. 1. 20.

helpless, slaves and debtors.[1253] After Croesus allowed the reorganisation of the goddess' cult in around 550 BC, reconstruction of her temple began under the supervision of Chersiphron, a Cretan architect, while Theodorus of Samos was in charge of the sculptural decoration inside the new, marble temple. In 356 BC, the temple of the Ephesian goddess was destroyed in a fire and a new temple was not built until 120 years later.[1254] Most scholars agree that the wooden image of the goddess in the shape of an xoanon was also destroyed in the fire and that a cult statue of Artemis, with richer iconography in the context of the animal and vegetable ornaments that adorned the goddess' dress and body (including the round pendants on the deity's chest), was placed in the new temple.[1255] Thus, the statue of Artemis of Ephesus placed in Artemision presented her primarily as a goddess of animals, fertility and nurture. Archaeological excavations of Artemision discovered a large amount of sheep, goat and cow bones, which implies that those animals were most frequently sacrificed in the goddess' honour. Fragmented lamps and ritual vessels also discovered in the temple indicate that sacrificial rituals were performed not only by daylight but also at night.[1256] The Artemision enjoyed worldwide fame because of its wealth (large amounts of money were kept in it), but also because of its excellent reputation, which was the reason for rich individuals to keep their treasure in the temple of the goddess. Special administratives took care of the donations given to the temple, but also kept other people's money and were responsible for the inheritances that wealthy people left to Artemis' temple.[1257] The fate of Artemision was sealed with Gothic attacks in 262, when all its treasure was looted and the temple was burned.

The enigmatic institution of Ephesian Artemis' eunuch priests, known as megabyzoi or megabyxos, megabyxoi (*μεγάβυζος, μεγάβυζου*), is first mentioned without any doubt in the 4th century BC (perhaps 384) by Xenophon, who writes about a megabyzos, a neokoros of Artemis, to whom he gave part of his war loot for safekeeping, until he returned for it.[1258] However, the clergy of the goddess were probably taking care of her temple from the late 6th century BC.[1259]Strabo tells that a megabyzos was a eunuch, while Pseudo-Heraclitus states that 'Ephesians castrate megabyzos because they cannot bear that a man is a priest of the virgin goddess'.[1260] Plutarch, Lucian and Quintilian also mentioned megabyzos, but it is not certain whether they really thought specifically about the priest of the Ephesian Artemis.[1261] It is quite strange that on numerous inscriptions discovered in Ephesus, the term megabyzos (or megabyzoi for that matter) is not attested at all.[1262] However, the term *megabyxos* appears earliest in Darius' inscription on the rock of Behistun meaning 'he who serves (satisfies) God'.[1263] Different opinions exist in scholarly literature about the meaning of the word megabyzos. One group of scholars think that the term is actually a Greek translation of a Persian personal name *Bagabriksha,* which means 'freed from God'. Another hypothesis suggests that megabyzos was actually a title of one of Darius' generals and that the Ephesians, in their wish to appease their Persian rulers, identically named the priests of their most important deity.[1264] However, I would agree with the hypothesis of J. O. Smith, who argues that if the goddess' priests were known as megabyzoi in Ephesus, the term would certainly be mentioned at least once on some epigraphic or archaeological monument. Therefore, it is possible, as the scholar suggests, that Artemis' priests were not referred to by that name in Ephesus, but only outside of Ephesus, which would explain the use of the term by ancient writers.[1265] One of the latest mentions of megabyzos is known from two inscriptions from Priene, dated to 296-295 BC, where a certain Megabyzos (son of Megabyzos) was honoured with a crown, statue and a stele, because of his dedication and loyalty to the

[1253] Pausanias, *Description of Greece,* VII. 2. 7; Oster 1990: 1715.

[1254] Plinius the Elder writes that the building of the most wonderful monument of Grecian magnificence, the temple of Diana at Ephesus, took 120 years to be finished, Plin. *The Natural History,* XXXVI. 21. Artemision presented one of the world's seven wonders which Strabo and Pliny the Elder describe – it was a temple in Ionian style with 21 columns in length and 9 columns in width, of monumental dimensions, with three entrances on the front side, decorated with the statues of Amazons. The temple's interior was decorated with the mythological scenes from the myths about Hercules, Apollo, Theseus, Thanatos, Hermes, Alcestis, Hades and Persephone, as with the scene of Alexander the Great holding a thunderbolt and a presentation of megabyzos procession, Burrell 2004: 74; Strelan 1996: 74.

[1255] LiDonnici 1992: 403. Strabo also cites that Alexander the Great offered money for the restoration of Artemision, but Ephesians rejected him and succeeded in gathering the finances from private donations and selling columns of the old temple, Strabo, *Geography,* XIV, 1.22.

[1256] It is presumed that the sacrificial animal was richly decorated and led to the altar accompanied by virgins (who carried the baskets with ritual knives), musicians and priests, but also by goddess's adherents, Strelan 1997: 72.

[1257] Ibid: 76-77; Oster 1990: 1718—1719.

[1258] The money was later returned to Xenophon by neokoros and Xenophon used it to buy a plot of wooded land, built an altar and a sanctuary reminding of Artemision, in which he placed a statue of the Ephesian Artemis in it, Smith 1996: 324; Friesen 1993: 52, ft. 12. The oldest work where the term Megabyxos appears is the comedy Tolmai by Crates (450-430 BC), Bremmer 2008: 39.

[1259] Rogers 2012: 47.

[1260] Strabo, *Geography,* XIV, 1. 23.

[1261] Plutarch mentions 'Persian megabyzos' who was dressed in purple dress and gold, while Lucian writes about megabyzos in the context of his impressive wealth. Quintilian speaks about certain megabyzos, eunuch, whose body didn't correspond to the postulates of sculptors and painters, because of its imperfection, Smith 1996: 324.

[1262] However, another group of religious functionaries is mentioned in Ephesian inscriptions from the 4th and 3rd century BC, called *essênes.* They were in charge of the assignment of new citizens, they probably dealt with finances in connection with the sale of citizenship, had to be chaste for a year and had the obligation to give banquets, which means that they had to be of solid financial state, Bremmer 2008: 52.

[1263] Ibid: 38-39.

[1264] Smith 1996: 330.

[1265] Ibid: 331.

goddess.[1266] The last mention of a eunuch priest dates from the middle of the 1st century BC, when Ephesians put a plea to Cleopatra not to arrest a megabyzos, whom Marcus Antonius planned to take in front of the court.[1267] However, as J. Bremmer rightly observes, that did not mean that male priests did not serve anymore in the Artemision, they were probably still present but in a reduced number, which, perhaps, indicates a change in the organisation within the goddess' clergy.[1268]

To summarise, the priests of the Ephesian Artemis were eunuchs, who took care of the finances of the goddess' sanctuary and, perhaps, were not the same priests who sacrificed at the divinity's altar.[1269] Priestesses also served in the goddess' cult - the first known priestess was Aristarche, who was ordered by the Ephesian goddess to take a copy of her statue to the new colony of Massilia, and there she became the deity's first priestess.[1270] The priestesses of Artemis of Ephesus were most probably virgins (as in the case of the cults of Artemis Triklaria of Patrae, Artemis of Aegeira and Artemis Knagia in Sparta), who served the goddess for one year and, since the function to serve the goddess was a great honour, they mostly belonged to upper class families.[1271] The goddess' priestesses were in charge of performing public sacrifices, sharing out money on the deity's birthday and were a *prytanis* and/ or a gymnasiarch.[1272]

The presentations of Artemis of Ephesia are particularly frequent on coinage, which was a powerful and useful instrument for Roman emperors to emphasise the close relationship between Ephesus and Rome. Thus, on Nero's coins issued in Ephesus, the goddess Roma is presented holding a statue of the Ephesian Artemis, while on the coins from Hadrian's period, on the obverse Antoninus Pius's bust was shown, while on the reverse two temples with images of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius were presented with Artemis of Ephesus between them.[1273] At the beginning of the 3rd century, after a period of financial problems, plague and famine, the mysteries of Artemis of Ephesus were renewed and started to be celebrated again, but with less fervour than in the 2nd century – there were no longer so many benefactors willing to fund new building projects in Ephesus or to pay for lavish celebrations.[1274] Although from the period of Lysimachos' reorganisation of the cult, Artemis was regarded as a goddess of salvation, in the 3rd century she held primarily that dimension for her devotees. The fame and reputation of the goddess were, however, still represented in the old grandeur, with coin representations of Geta and Caracalla showing the two emperors (or one of them) saluting the Ephesian goddess, while on Elagabalus' coins, the ruler is presented sacrificing in front of the goddess's temple Artemision.[1275] The last presentations of the deity's image on coins are from the reign of Valerian and Gallienus, after which the Goths attacked the city and the last renaissance of Artemis' image on coins can be constated on the coins of Maximinus Daia.[1276]

With the rise of Christianity and the further decline of paganism, the disappearance of the cult of the Ephesian Artemis was inevitable.[1277] The ardent attacks of Christians and Christian writers on the goddess and her cult were even more passionate than on other pagan deities, as Pausanias observed, because her cult attracted many followers due to its tradition and longevity, and its monumental temple, but also because of the goddess' powerful reputation with which she represented the city of Ephesus.[1278] In 262, a strong earthquake struck Ephesus and left many houses of the richest residents in ruins, while Artemision was left without a roof and was soon in ruins too, as a result of a destructive fire.[1279] The Ephesian Artemis' temple was never again restored after these catastrophes, much like the reputation and fame of the goddess herself.

In the 5th century Ephesus, a cross replaced the statue of the goddess Artemis - an Antique inscription discovered in the city informs us that a Christian named Demeas destroyed 'a deceitful image of the demonic Artemis' and set up the inscription with the cross in honour of Christ who drives away the idols.[1280] However, the deity's cult continued to exist through the 5th century in her main place of adoration, Ephesus, which can be explained with the persistence of her followers to continue worshipping the goddess to the extent

[1266] LiDonnici 1999: 208.
[1267] Bremmer 2008: 41.
[1268] Ibid: 50-51.
[1269] Ibid: 42.
[1270] Strabo, *Geography,* IV. 1, 4.
[1271] Bremmer 2008: 44-46. Plutarch writes about the three degrees in priestess's function: the 'future', 'present' and 'past' priestess, that is *archiereia* – 'high priestess' and other two degrees which were probably subordinated to the mentioned one. Also a *parthenon,* a place where priestesses of the goddess had to stay, is confirmed in Ephesus, Bremmer 2013: 154.
[1272] Ibid: 50.
[1273] Burrell 2004: 60-70.
[1274] Rogers 2012: 249.
[1275] Burrell 2004: 71-75.
[1276] Ibid: 79.
[1277] Christians particularly criticised Artemis of Ephesus because of the prostitution of her priestesses in Artemision. This claim originates from Christian writers and caused many debates between scholars, because there are no references in historical sources to this praxis. The priestesses of Ephesian Artemis were in goddess's service for one year and came from distinguished Ephesian families, judging by their mostly Roman names (or a mixture of Greek and Roman names, like Claudia Olympias for example). They were introduced into their function at a young age, as virgins, Baugh 1999: 443-460.
[1278] Strelan 1996: 80.
[1279] Rogers 2012: 253.
[1280] Demeas' inscription was discovered in 1904. year in a secondarily used monument which was probably a base of Ephesian Artemis' statue and contains the text in which Demeas states that he destroyed the goddess's statue honouring Christ and his immortal symbol, the cross. The monument is dated to the 5th century, Kristensen 2013: 9-14.

that they dug certain cult objects from her temple and carried on with venerating Artemis of Ephesus.[1281]

8.2. The Cult of Artemis of Ephesus in the Central Balkans

Unlike other Asia Minor cults, traces of the cult of the Ephesian Artemis in the Central Balkans Roman provinces are left only in the shape of two gems and a lamp with the goddess' image.[1282] Since the cult of the Syrian goddess Dea Syria is also attested with only a few monuments, the reason that both cults did not spread more in the Central Balkans or were not more favoured by the Central Balkan population can be found in the fact that both goddesses were equated with Magna Mater, whose cult enjoyed much popularity in the territory. A similar situation can be observed in other Roman provinces as well, because, except in Ephesus and Hierapolis, the towns where Artemis and Dea Syria were venerated as supreme goddesses, outside their homeland territories both goddesses were assimilated with Magna Mater.

The first gem is, unfortunately, of unknown provenience and presents the Ephesian goddess en face, standing with open arms (cat. 1).[1283] She is covered with a cloak (or perhaps two wider bands). The figure of Artemis is summarily done, but above it, on deity's left side, a motif of the Moon is presented, while on her right side a star is shown. The lack of skill of the artisan does not allow us to presume the hairstyle or eventual attribute that the goddess wore on her head. The presentation of Artemis of Ephesus generally corresponds with so-far known images of the goddess – she was usually shown standing, sometimes with open arms, with a *corona muralis* or modius or kalathos on her head, ornamented with different attributes (animals, buildings, etc.).[1284] Since on the gem of unknown provenience, the figure of the goddess is presented in a summary way, and the details like her dress or possible pendants on her chest and other ornaments with which her clothes were usually adorned, cannot be recognised, we turned to two motifs presented on both her sides. The frequent presentation of lunar symbols in the Ephesian Artemis' imagery is explained by her identification with Hecate, Selene or the Babylonian goddess Erershkigal, who were all primarily chthonian deities.[1285] The Moon and stars are symbols *par excellence* of the goddess Hecate, but also Selene, therefore, it is impossible to presume with which one of them the image of Artemis of Ephesus is syncretised in the gem.[1286] On the other hand, the star is a characteristic symbol of Dioscuri, who are often presented with the Ephesian goddess on Roman coins.[1287] However, what can be presumed with some degree of certainty is that the central figure shows Artemis of Ephesus, additionally supported with the motifs of two bands, which is a well known detail the goddess was sometimes presented with, as for example on a Roman clay lamp.[1288] The presentations of Artemis

[1281] An interesting detail of the on-going power of goddess's cult after the 4th century, can be comprehended from the fact that during the archaeological excavations of Artemision, in the 5th century layer in one room of the temple, a statue of the deity was found, broken into three parts, but not destroyed. In another room another statue of Ephesian Artemis was discovered, but hidden with care. It is clear that in the minds of Ephesians in the 5th century, the goddess was still regarded as a powerful and omnipotens divinity and her statues weren't destroyed, Strelan 1996: 82.

[1282] I should mention three votive monuments discovered in the area of Stobi, which present three possible testimonies of Ephesian Artemis' cult in the area, but since the restoration of the inscriptions is arbitrary, I think they can't be included in the corpus of goddess's monuments. The first votive monument was discovered on the locality Dolno Čičevo (vicinity of Stobi) and N. Vulić presumes that it was dedicated to Artemis of Ephesus solely on the presence of the goddess's name, Вулић 1931: 46, num. 104. Since the part of Dolno Čičevo' monument on which the epithet of the goddess was carved is damaged, N. Vulić suggested that it was perhaps *Εφεσιαι*. However, J. Wiseman thinks that the missing epithet is *Λοχίαι,* but both epithets of the goddess are not testified in the area of Stobi, Wiseman 1973: 182; Düll 1977: 288-289, num. 36. The text of the inscription doesn't allow any further speculations about the eventual epithet of the goddess. Similar would be applied for two other monuments found in the area of Stobi - a relief representation of a horseman with two dogs in front of him, with the inscription where the missing epithet of Artemis can only be presumed and the fragment of the votive altar also discovered in the area of Stobi, where N. Vulić suggested again the epithet of the goddess could be *Εφεσια,* but without any arguments, Вулић 1933: 27, num. 70; Düll 1977: num. 67; Paschidis 144, ft. 32.

[1283] Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 422, cat. 330, T. XXVIII/330.

[1284] On the majority of so-far known presentations of Artemis of Ephesus, the goddess is shown with a mural crown, however sometimes she is presented with a crown with small storeyed various buildings, Turcan 1996: 254. On the sculpture from Rome, the deity is presented with a mural crown where on the top of the walls a small temple is shown, Fleischer 1973: 10-11, E 31; on the sculpture from Ephesus, the divinity has a crown in the shape of a monumental building with three levels (the last storey is presented as a temple), Ibid: 14, E45, Taf. 12-17. bronze statuette of Ephesian Artemis from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is presented with a crown in the shape of a building with five levels, Ibid: 25, E83, while the statue of the goddess from National Library in Paris has a crown in four levels, Ibid: 26, E85.

[1285] The equitation and syncretism between goddess Selene and particularly goddess Hecate with Ephesian Artemis is well known in the Antiquity and magic amulets with the images of two goddesses are also known, Arnold 1989: 23.

[1286] The goddess Hecate was equated with the lunar dimension of goddess Artemis, known as Artemis *δαδοφορος*, Paris 1904a: 46-47. In the context of equitation of Ephesian Artemis with goddess Selena, that is goddess Hecate, the intertwining of chthonian and solar aspects of the goddesses was testified before the Hellenistic period, although certain iconographic elements (the chariot that the goddesses drive, the attribute of a torch, the motif of the crescent) are not shown together in the presentations of the goddess Selene, but gradually, only to, during the Roman time, form a unique cult image (as on the sarcophagus of Endymion, with the legend of Selene and Endymion in Louvre), Legrand 1904: 1391-1392.

[1287] As in the coins of Caracalla, Turcan 1996: 254. Lunar symbolism of Dioscuri shouldn't be explained in detail, but I will mention that the divine pair wasn't presented with a star because of the part of the myth where Zeus puts them among the stars, but because of their primary symbolism as protectors of the sailors – they were most frequently presented with a star *lucida sidera* which helps the sailors to orientate. Also, the image of Dioscuri with a star above their heads or just with a star, signifies their general symbolism of lunar deities, Cumont 1942: 81 and further.

[1288] The goddess Artemis of Ephesus is presented in a usual way, wearing a polos on her head, standing with open arms over which two bands hang. Beside the goddess, two deers are represented. This type of imagery isn't so seldom, it is seen on the bronze plate from Rome,

of Ephesus with the motifs of the Moon and stars on gems and coins are mainly known from the period of Caracalla and Geta. Therefore, I would suggest the first half of the 3rd century as a probable time for the gem's production by a local artisan.

The second gem with an image of the Ephesian Artemis was found in the necropolis in Kostolac, Viminacium (cat. 2).[1289] The gem is oval in shape and presents the goddess standing, wearing a polos on her head. Both her hands are open and in each the goddess is holding a torch. As in the case of the gem of unknown provenience, the goddess' image from the Viminacium gem presents a very summary image of the deity, on which a disproportionality between the oversized head and the conic body can be observed. The polos on the goddess' head is somewhat more emphasised than in the divinity's image on the previous gem. The iconographic type of Artemis of Ephesus holding torches in her hands was quite a popular type of the goddess's presentations as a lunar goddess. The Ephesian Artemis, as a 'bearer of torches', was *λαμπάσι πυρφόροις*, attested as such not only iconographically, but also in epigraphic monuments.[1290] On the gem from Viminacium's necropolis, the attribute of a torch alludes to the syncretism with the goddess Hecate – so-far known presentations of the Ephesian goddess testify to the adoption of certain iconographic elements characteristic of the goddess Hecate.[1291] The attribute of a torch clearly implies the chthonian character, but it could also designate a celestial dimension.[1292] Since the gem was discovered in a tomb, its apotropaic and soteriological symbolism can also be presumed. Iconographic analogies are numerous, but I will mention a few of the most characteristic, like a gem from Knosos and the presentations of the Ephesian goddess with torches from Hadrian's coins.[1293] The summary shaping of the deity's image suggests a local work from, probably, the 3rd century.

The lamp with the image of Ephesian Artemis was found in the south-western necropolis of Stobi, in the grave of a cremated deceased (cat. 3).[1294] The female figure is represented as a standing woman dressed in a long dress, with a modius on her head and a halo around her head. She is leaning with both hands on two staffs-sceptres. On Artemis of Ephesus' left and right side, there are two figures of deers, usual animal followers of the goddess presented, turned with their backs to each other. Different relief motifs are visible on the long dress of the goddess, presumably the usual ones like protomes of animals' heads, flowers, plants etc. The chthonian aspect of Artemis of Ephesus on the lamp from Stobi necropolis is very clear, but judging by the context – the grave of a deceased, her apotropaic symbolism can also be presumed. Based on the finds of ceramics, the grave can be dated into the period of the 3rd or 4th century.[1295]

The two gems and a lamp described above represent the only traces of the goddess' cult in the Central Balkans territory that allow us to presume a few aspects with which the deity's cult objects were endowed. The content of the gem from Viminacium's necropolis is clearer because of the chthonian dimension of the goddess' image, but also because of the context of the finding – the apotropaic and soteriological function of the goddess was to protect and ensure rebirth and eternal life for the deceased. Unlike the gem from Viminacium, the gem of unknown provenience implies the goddess' celestial dimension, as a deity of astral spheres, but also points to her syncretism with Hecate or Selene. In both cases, the apotropaic and soteriological character of the object can be suggested - to secure the deceased the goddess' protection and new life after death. All three objects had value, as religious agents, for their owners who venerated the cult of the Ephesian Artemis and the goddess, whose protection and support the owners had in life and in death too.

Although in the territory of the Central Balkans the cult of Artemis of Ephesus is not confirmed epigraphically or in relief presentations, it is attested in several localities from today's Macedonia, which could explain the absence of votive or funerary monuments of the goddess in the central region of the Balkans. Votive monuments dedicated to the goddess were discovered in the village of Živojno (the area of Bitolj),[1296] Treskavac (area of Prilep), Kokra and Kolobais.[1297]

two votive stelae from Leiden and numerous examples of Roman coins and gems, Coleman 1965: 113.

[1289] Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 422-423, cat. 331, T. XXVIII/331.

[1290] For example, on the inscription from Sardis, where the dedicant of a vow has to plea Artemis of Ephesus for her help and give her temple a golden statuette, because the goddess will drive away all poisonous and magic forces that caused troubles to the dedicant, Strelan 1996: 46-47.

[1291] In *Anthologia Palatina,* in the context of Artemis of Ephesus, the equitation of the goddess with goddess Hecate with torches is mentioned. Numerous presentations of lunar Artemis (sometimes winged), with torches in her hands are known from vases, terracottas and coins, Paris 1904a: 133.

[1292] During the Hellenistic period, Artemis of Ephesus (due to the equitation with goddess Hecate) was represented holding torches in her hands. The attribute of a torch had various meanings in Hecate's cult, but primarily it was an apotropaic and soteriological symbol, Nock 1926: 52.

[1293] Fleischer 1984: 758.

[1294] Bitrakova Grozdanova 2020: 92-93.

[1295] Ibid.

[1296] On a votive monument from Živojno (discovered in village church), dated to the 2nd century, certain Glaukias, a slave of Ancharienus Adaios is dedicating a monument to Artemis of Ephesus, Вулић 1933: 13, num. 20; Düll 1977, 290-291, num. 39-40.

[1297] The monument from Treskavac was discovered as spolia on the roof of the church in the monastery (as a holder for a cross) and is also dated to the 2nd century, with a dedication of a woman (the name is missing because of the damaged part of the monument), who is dedicating her slave Helene, Helene's daughter Peristera and the future offspring of them both, to the goddess Artemis of Ephesus, Вулић 1934: 56-57, num. 58; Paschidis 2018: 140.

Iconographic representations as statues of the Ephesian deity are known from the locality of Suvodol (the vicinity of Bitolj) and Levunovo, Muletarevo and Slivnica – all three localities situated in the wider area of Sandanski.[1298] The analysis of epigraphic and archaeological testimonies of the goddess' cult implies that in the earliest representations in Macedonia (votive monument from the village of Živojno), Artemis of Ephesus is shown in the company of Dioscuri, whose cult was already known and favoured in the area, which leads us to the conclusion that the goddess' introduction was facilitated by familiar deities.[1299] Also, the goddess is not shown in her usual canonical way, but more as a local goddess of similar cultic character as the Ephesian deity (probably a hunting goddess, but also a goddess who protects and takes care of the inhabitants of the area in question). Again, the balance between well known indigenous gods and foreign gods had to be maintained and in epigraphic monuments it is achieved by the claim that Artemis Ephesia encouraged her female worshippers to dedicate monuments to her because of various reasons.[1300] In that way, an effort was made whereby the cult of the Ephesian Artemis and the cults of similar indigenous goddesses were equated and assimilated, with the goal of fully incorporating a new and foreign cult into an unfamiliar territory.

The cult of Artemis of Ephesus is attested only a few times epigraphically and archaeologically in the Danubian provinces. A bronze statuette of the goddess, discovered in Apulum, presents one of the rare iconographic testimonies of the goddess in the territory, which, in the opinions of C. Szabó, R. Ota and M. M. Ciuta, is proof of the deity's worship not only in temples and shared spaces, but also in a domestic, private context.[1301]

As for the Central Balkans territory and the cult of the goddess Artemis of Ephesus, we can only presume that the owners and believers in the goddess' cult were probably of Asia Minor or Greek origin, who passed through or were settled in Viminacium, Stobi and some unknown locality in the central regions of the Balkans in the 3rd century.

[1298] Düll 1977: 296, num. 51, 298, num. 54, 302, num. 64, 305, num. 70.

[1299] Paschidis 2018: 145-146.

[1300] On the votive monument from the village Treskavec, a woman is making a dedication to Artemis of Ephesus to redeem herself from her sins, while on the votive monument from Kokre the dedication is offered to secure the will of the couple's daughter to remain a virgin for 27 years by the command of Artemis of Ephesus, Ibid: 140-144.

[1301] The only known cult object of Artemis from Ephesus in Dacia is presented in the shape of a bronze statuette recovered in 2006, from one of the biggest private archaeological collections looted from different Roman localities in Romania. It was first wrongly identified by V. Moga as a statuette of goddess Hekate, however C. Szabó, R. Ota and M. M. Ciuta identified the statuette as Ephesian Artemis by her iconographic features (like a head-gear and oval shaped ornaments on her breasts). The statuette was probably found in the central area of the Partos in Apulum, where numerous bronze statuettes have been found and is probably linked to the cult of Diana Mellifica sacrum or honey maker Diana (confirmed with the epigraphic monument found in Apulum), who was as Artemis of Ephesus, associated with bees and honey, Csaba, Ota, Ciuta 2016: 234.

II Syrian Religions in the Central Balkans

1. Sol Invictus

1.1. The Cult of Sol Invictus in Roman culture

The rise of Sol Invictus' cult was associated in the earlier scholarly literature with the reign of the emperor Elagabalus, as the further development of the cult was connected to the period of Aurelian, when the Syrian cult of the Sun god dominated the pantheon of Roman deities.[1302] However, in contemporary scholarly literature the question as to how and to what degree the cult of Sol Invictus should be considered a cult of Syrian origin and how far the cult of the Roman god Sol be disregarded, since it was a cult whose origin and development reached deep into the period of the Roman republic, has been frequently discussed. Without any intention of entering deeper into the debates from earlier literature regarding the origin, development and diffusion of the Solar cult in Roman religion, I will just present a concise review of the opinions and conclusions of scholars who have analysed the subject thoroughly. A. Fon Domaszevski considered the cult of Sol as one of the oldest indigenous cults in Roman religion.[1303] G. Wissowa differentiated two forms of the god Sol – the indigenous deity, Sol Ingides and the later cult of Sol Invictus, which was of eastern origin and, for some period of time, a part of imperial propaganda. The author thought that Sol Indiges was the Greek god Helios, imported into Rome during the second Roman war with Carthage.[1304] The arguments of G. Wissowa influenced later authors' opinions. Thus, F. Cumont completely abandoned the idea of an indigenous origin for the god Sol and suggested a Syrian origin for the cult. The author stated that traditional Roman gods were venerated out of civic duty, while Oriental gods (like Sol Invictus, for example) were worshipped because of personal beliefs.[1305] Also, F. Cumont offered some rational reasons as well in the fact that during the period of the Seleucid dynasty, local Syrian Baals were transformed into solar deities, whose cults started to spread into the western provinces from the 1st century, aided by the presence of astrological ideas, which led to the complete syncretism of Semitic and Roman beliefs into the idea of one almighty, universal and eternal deity – the Sun god.[1306] Thus, the eastern influence became predominant in the context of the cult of the god Sol, which can be seen in later works of, for example, H. P. L'Orange, who explained the raised hand of the god Sol in the position of *ad locutio* with the fact that the iconographic element is of Oriental origin, introduced during the reign of Severi.[1307] G. H. Halsberghe also differentiates two Sols – Sol Indiges and Sol Invictus, but argues the evidence for an indigenous god and states that the cult of Sol Invictus appeared prominently on Mark Anthony's coins and was later promoted during Augustus' reign.[1308] The author distinguishes the Roman Sol and the Sol with Syrian traditions, who was introduced into Rome in the 3rd century by Elagabalus.[1309] In his conclusions, G. H. Halsberghe emphasises that Aurelian's Sol Invictus was actually a syncretistic form of Roman and Syrian sun-cults and that the politics of Elagabalus and Aurelian furthered the veneration of Sol's cult, making him a unique, omnipotent protecting deity of Oriental character, who established a firm relationship with the Roman emperors.[1310] P. Matern believes that the true nature of the god Sol Invictus is not quite clear, but that the cult continued the tradition of the Roman Sol. However, in the author's opinion, Sol Invictus was a deity of different origin and characteristics from the Roman god.[1311] S. Berrens, in his analysis of Roman coins with the image of Sol, indicated that there are no arguments in favour of claims that the god's cult was of Oriental origin, but that he was an indigenous deity. The author based his opinion on the fact that the epithet Invictus (one of the main arguments of the authors

[1302] In earlier literature, ongoing discussion existed whether the distinction should be made between the indigenous cult of the Sun god and the Syrian cult of Sol. Varo writes that the cult of Sol dates from the time of Titus Tatius and Festus connects the beginning of the cult with the family of Aureliii who was of Sabinian origin. However, in the scholarly literature from the end of the 19th and part of the 20th century, the ancient writers were ignored, like the fact that the cult of Sol is of autochthonous origin, Hijmans 2009: 2.

[1303] Halsberghe 1972: 26-27.

[1304] S. Hijmans think that the reason for G. Wissowa belief that Romans overtook the cult of Greek Helios was because he couldn't believe that Romans were anything but practical in their religion too, as in other spheres, and that therefore, the author thought that in the early period of Roman history, practical gods were important and not the gods with abstract religious content, like god Sol, Hijmans 2009: 3.

[1305] Cumont 1911: 44.

[1306] The important role of god Sol in Mithra's cult also had some influence on F. Cumont's opinions, Ibid: 134.

[1307] Hijmans 2009: 20.

[1308] Halsberghe 1972: 29.

[1309] G. H. Halsberghe writes that starting from the 2nd century, the cult of Eastern Sun gods began to influence Rome and the rest of the Empire and that legionaries were responsible for spreading the sun-cults, particularly the cult of god Mithras, Ibid: 35-36.

[1310] The author based his arguments mainly on the *Historia Augusta* description of Elagabalus and Aurelian, Ibid: 42, 45-48, 139, 157-159.

[1311] Hijmans 2009: 24.

who claimed that Sol was a Syrian divinity), appears on coins only in 260-261, almost 70 years after first images of the god on the coins. Also, S. Berrens explains the variety of epithets that Sol had on coins with the fact that, for Romans, the god symbolised rebirth and eternal life, victory and peace.[1312] Today's most accepted opinion in scholarly literature regarding the cult of Sol comes from S. Hijmans and his conclusions about the continuity in the Romans' veneration of the Sun god.[1313] In his extensive study, which encompassed the majority of epigraphic and archaeological material connected to the god, S. Hijmans states that Sol was a Roman deity throughout the Republic and Imperial period[1314] and that only in the framed time-period, from the end of the 2nd century to the end of Late Antiquity, can the influence of Syrian sun-cults in the god's cult be noticed, but that he was still a Roman god.[1315]

The cult of Sol Invictus is confirmed in Rome during the second half of the 2nd century[1316] and it is presumed that Romans came into contact with the Syrian sun-cult somewhat earlier, during the reign of the emperor Hadrian.[1317] During the reign of Antoninus Pius, the cult was not favoured, because the emperor was inclined to the return of the *mos maiores*, but in the period of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, the sun cult spread in the military camps and among the civilians. Numerous attestations of Sol Invictus' cult are related to the period of Commodus' reign in Rome, but also in Roman provinces including Dacia, Germania and Spain.[1318] Commodus was the first Roman ruler to add the epithet *Invictus* to his official title and on whose coins the image of Sol is frequently present. The epithet *Invictus* is attributed to the names of Roman gods, like Apollo, Mercury, Mars, Silvanus as early as in the Republican period (from the 3rd century BC), therefore, it was not exclusively the epithet of Oriental deities (nor did it designate the Oriental origin of Sol, as some authors, like F. Cumont and S. Weinstock, have tried to prove), but of Roman gods and goddesses as well.[1319]

Even greater significance to the cult of Sol was given by Septimius Severus, during whose reign coins with an image of Sol and the legend *Invicto imperatori* appeared.[1320] The emperor was connected privately with the sun-cult, because his spouse, Julia Domna, was from an influential family from Emesa (today's Homs in western Syria) and the daughter of Sol's high priest – *sacerdos amplissimus Dei Solis Invicti Elagabali.*[1321] This imperial attention for the god Sol Invictus continued during the reign of Geta and Caracalla – Geta is presented on coins as a god, with a radiate crown,[1322] while the true culmination of the Syrian sun-cult came with a selection of the new emperor, after Caracalla's murder, Varius Avitus Bassianus, that

[1312] Berrens 2004: 171-176, 184-198.

[1313] S. Hijmans suggests that Romans continuously worshipped god Sol from the mid-Republic (and probably earlier) until the end of the 4th century. The author cites Varro and Festus, who testify about the old origin of the deity (even from the first years of Rome's existence) and emphasises that Sol was one of the ancestral gods in Rome who had a shrine and/or secret grove on the banks of the Numicius, near Lavinium. The god also had his festivities on the 8th or the 9th August and on the 11th December (the *agonalia* held then were one of four agonalia which took place each year in the honour of Janus, Mars and Vediovis). Sol had two temples in the Republican period, situated at the Circus Maximus (depicted on coins of Marcus Antonius, Trajan and Caracalla) and on the Quirinal, Hijmans 2010: 382-383.

[1314] S. Hijmans also refers to the epithet Invictus which in his opinion isn't an oriental term, but a term imported into Rome during the early Empire, used for astral deities (later mainly for gods Jupiter, Mars and Hercules, Hijmans 2009: 19.

[1315] In his extensive discussion pro et contra Oriental origin and character of the god Sol Invictus, among other elements, S. Hijmans proves that there are no oriental elements in god's iconography, Hijmans 1996: 125-126; Hijmans 2009: 1-30.

[1316] On a votive monument of Publius Aelius Amandus who was *eques singularis Augusti,* Halsberghe 1972: 45.

[1317] G. H. Halsberghe presumes that Hadrian's image with sun rays on the coins from 129 implies the contact with the Syrian sun cult. During Trajan's expeditions to Dacia and eastern provinces, Hadrian was pronounced *legatus Syriae* thus coming in closer contact with Syrian culture and religion. On a cornelian intaglio from Dalmatia (belonged to Sir Arthur Evans) a veiled Elagabalus is shown as Genius Populi Romani, pouring a libation, but wearing the radiate crown and dress of a priest of Elagabalus, Middleton 1991: 104, num. 179. G. H. Halsberghe thinks that the series of coins with Sol in a chariot with four horses on the reverse, also confirm Hadrian's wish to identify with god Sol, Halsberghe 1972: 46.

[1318] *CIL* VI, 740; Votive monument from Apulum contains a dedication to the god from certain Gaius Caerelius Sabinus, who restores the deity's temple, *CIL* III, 1111. That Commodus was very inclined to Sol Invictus and perhaps wished to be equated with him, can be implicated by his gesture of taking off the head of Sol from the monumental sculpture in the vicinity of Colosseum and putting a replica of his own head on the statue, Levick 2007: 126.

[1319] F. Cumont thought that the word *Invictus* is actually the translation from Oriental-Greek epithet *άνικητος* (invincible, strong) and that it was used in Roman Empire only from the Imperial period, solely with the names of Oriental deities of solar or astral character, Cumont 1899: 47-48, 73 and further. However, S. Hijmans shows that Roman tradition and poetry (particularly works of Virgil, Ovid, Propertius, Martial etc.) imply that the epithet was attributed to the names of Roman gods like Apollo, Mercury, Mars, Silvanus, Minerva etc. for a long time. S. Weinstock believed that the epithet *Invictus* is derived from the word *νικητος,* which was the epithet of Alexander the Great. In the author's opinion, Scipio Africanus was the first who, inspired by the exemplum Alexandri, attributed the epithet Invictus to his name, Weinstock 1957: 221-222. However, S. Hijmans concluded that the epithet Invictus, attributed to the name of god Sol isn't of Oriental origin and doesn't designate Syrian origin of the god Sol and that it carries the same significance as when attributed to the names of other Roman gods and goddesses, Hijmans 2009: 20.

[1320] On Septimius Severus' series of coins, the image of Sol Invictus is very frequent, while on the series of coins from 193 and 194, for the first time the legend *Invicto imperatori* appears. At the same time, around 194, Septimius Severus divides Syria into two parts, Syria Coele and Syria Phoinice where Emesa becomes capital and as a centre of the cult of Sol Invictus, gets bigger political and religious significance. Epigraphical monuments dedicated to the god become more frequent – on a votive monument found in Spain, a god has the epithet *aeternus,* while on a votive monument from Intercisa, where a large number of soldiers and archers from Emesa were stationed, the god is named 'Soli Patrio Elagabalo', *AE* 1910, 133.

[1321] Septimius Severus and Iulia Domna were represented as god Sol and goddess Luna on the coins of the emperor Caracalla, Watson 2001: 189.

[1322] Beside the series of coins with the representations of the emperor, in the period of the reign of Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta, a temple of the sun god in Emesa was restored in 211, Halsberghe 1972: 51.

is Elagabalus, who ruled from 218 to 222.[1323] Before he became the emperor, Elagabalus was a priest in the temple of Sol Invictus Elagabalus, in Emesa, where the deity, analogous to Asia Minor customs as well, was presented in the shape of a black meteorite.[1324] Upon his arrival in Rome, Elagabalus placed the cult of Sol Invictus Elagabalus into Jupiter's temple and named it Elagabalium, where the daily veneration of the god was performed.[1325] Elagabalus' tendency to subordinate all gods and goddesses of the Roman pantheon to the Syrian sun-god was followed by the transfer of symbols of different deities into the Elagabalium.[1326] The emperor's adoration of Sol Invictus reached its peak between June and September, when festivities in the god's honour were held, comprising a holy procession during which Sol Invictus' sacred image in the shape of a black meteorite was carried from the Elagabalium through the streets of Rome, and sacrifices, ceremonial games and banquets were held.[1327] Elagabalus' almost fanatical idolatry of Sol Invictus was also mirrored in his private life – he divorced Aquilia Severa, the priestess of the goddess Vesta and entered into a new marriage with Ania Faustina, which was proclaimed to be a holy matrimony between the god Sol Invictus and goddess Dea Caelestis.[1328] The cult of Dea Caelestis was favoured in the Roman Empire and Elagabalus hoped that this act of holy marriage between the two deities would contribute to the further promotion of Sol Invictus' cult. Numerous presentations from Elagabalus' coins show the emperor sacrificing to the god, but also bear the legend of *Comes* and *Conservator,* which presents the deity as the emperor's companion and protector.[1329] The domination of the Sol Invictus cult ended with Elagabalus' murder in 222 by the Roman army and with his cousin, Alexander Severus, becoming the new emperor.[1330] During his reign, the sun-god cult continued to be venerated, but the name and deeds of his most ardent worshipper, Elagabalus, were subject to *damnatio memoriae.* Throughout the 3rd century, the cult of Sol Invictus continued to spread. However, in some parts of the Roman Empire it was suppressed by the cult of the god Mithras.[1331] A new rise of the cult happened during the reign of the emperor Aurelian, whose mother was a priestess of Sol Invictus.[1332] After victory over the Palmyrian queen Zenobia, but also after his conquests over the Goths in Dacia, and Persians and Carpi in Moesia Inferior, Aurelian turned to reforming the cult of Sol Invictus, starting with claiming the god as the official deity of the Roman Empire, in 274.[1333] The reasons for Aurelian choosing Sol Invictus over all other solar deities and not, for example, the god Mithras were practical: the cult was already a patron deity of Roman legions and protector of Roman soldiers, his theology was acceptable to all and the method of sacrificing and honouring the god was similar to the that of the old Roman deities.[1334] The emperor did not want to make the same mistake as Elagabalus and subordinate all deities to Sol Invictus – he decided to make the god equal to all other existing deities, but to present the sun-god as the 'sum of all attributes and guardian functions belonging to the other gods'.[1335] A series of coins with the legend *Sol Dominus Imperii romani* and representations of Aurelian sacrificing in honour of the god clearly imply the new role of the god Sol in Roman political ideology – the deity became a ruler and master of the whole Roman Empire.[1336] The second phase of the

[1323] The unconquered god of the Sun, Elagabalus is a deity whose origins are connected to Kanaan. His name (Elagabal, Elaeiagabal, Heliogabal) was derived from the Semitic word gabal, which means massive, exalted. The word gebal is also an Aramaic word for high places, therefore the sun god Elagabalus was probably worshipped in the mountains. Other opinions about the origin of the word are known – F. Lenormant identifies the god Gabal from Emesa with the Chaldean deity of fire and mentions that on the inscriptions Gabal was respected as a god of black stone and a god of cosmic fire. N. Fuller and C. P. Tiele state that the name El-Gabal is derived from the Syrian word gebal, which means the end, create, so in their opinion, the word El-Gabal would mean creator, Ibid: 62-63.

[1324] The black meteorite, a symbol of a sun god Elagabalus in his temple in Emesa, was often shown on Syrian coins. It can be shown behind an eagle, but also in the scenes where the eagle is standing on the meteorite covered with a cloak with jewels. In the courtyard of the temple in Emesa, was a monumental altar with the figures of deities who were subordinated to the sun god, Turcan 1996: 177. Every morning as a future emperor, Elagabalus sacrificed in honour of the god and every year in Emesa, ceremonies and games *ηλια πυθία* were held to honour the deity, Halsberghe 1972: 64-65.

[1325] Roman and Christian writers particularly criticized the lavish and bizarre daily sacrifices of the emperor to the Syrian Sol. In Oriental garment, with make-up and jewellery, Elagabalus would perform ritual practices in Elagabalium, followed by music and dance and would sacrifice a large number of sheep and bulls, but also performed libation with vine and blood of sacrificed animals, *Vita Heliogabali*, 8. 1-2.

[1326] Elagabalus transferred to Elagabalium sacred monuments like the fire of goddess Vesta, shields of god Mars, the sacred image of Magna Mater etc., Turcan 1996: 180.

[1327] Roman senators were particularly humiliated not only by wearing Oriental clothes while being present during the daily sacrifices in Elagabalium, but also with Elagabalus' calling them 'slaves in togae', Ibid: 20.1. The ceremonial procession was followed from Elagabalium through the streets of Rome to another temple of god Sol not only by the Roman residents but also by the army. On the head of the procession, different divine images and symbols were presented as Elagabalus dressed in luxurious clothes led by two slaves, for the reason that he couldn't see where he is going, because he had to look all the time in the symbol of Sol Invictus. Different animals were sacrificed during the ceremonies, after what games and rich banquets took place, Halsberghe 1972: 87-88.

[1328] Elagabalus gesture was widely accepted because of the significant popularity of the cult of Dea Caelestis, Ibid.

[1329] Turcan 1996: 181.

[1330] One of the first gestures of Alexander Severus was to return the sacred image of Sol Invictus in god's temple in Emesa, Ibid: 183.

[1331] For example, in Roman Britain, where the cult of Sol Invictus Elagabalus barely left a trace, comparing to votive monuments and relief presentations of god Mithras, Harris, Harris 1965: 3 and further.

[1332] Halsberghe 1972: 130.

[1333] Aurelian believed that god helped him in his victory over Palmyra, therefore as a gesture of thankfulness to god, he brought many Palmyrene treasures to god's temple in Rome, Watson 2001: 82. G. H. Halsberghe thinks that Aurelian carried out the reforms of Sol Invictus' cult in three phases, Halsberghe 1972: 138.

[1334] Ibid: 139.

[1335] Ibid: 142.

[1336] Aurelian's progressive propaganda of Sol Invictus' cult can be followed on the series of coins issued from the beginning of his reign: already in 271 the image of a lion (typical symbol of eastern sun gods)

reformation of Sol Invictus' cult comprised the building of a new temple for the god in Campus Agrippae, where statues of other gods and goddesses were placed too.[1337] Aurelian established ceremonial games, *agon Solis,* in honour of the god, which were to take place every four years.[1338] The third phase of the emperor's reforms was directed towards the founding and organisation of a collegium of priests (*pontifices dei Solis*), who, unlike the god's priests from the former period of Elagabalus' reign, were not from the lower social strata, but were chosen from among senators.[1339] It is believed that Sol's priests from the earlier period were so-called *calatores*, selected among the priests' freedmen.[1340] Inscriptions from votive monuments dedicated to *Sol Conservator* for the health of Aurelian, confirm that the god became the main protector and guardian of the Roman emperor.[1341] All the reforms that Aurelian undertook had one goal - to present Sol Invictus as the official Roman god of victory and success, whose official name was *Deus Sol* and whose character was universal, therefore, acceptable to all.[1342] The cult of Sol Invictus that existed and was venerated during Elagabalus' reign was completely forgotten and replaced with the cult of the god Sol, which was primarily of Roman character and that established tradition is the one that later Roman emperors would follow, such as during the period of Probus, who continued to strike the god's image on coins.[1343] The representations of the god Sol with Roman emperors are also known during the time of the emperors Carus, Diocletian, Maximian, Maximian Daia, Licinius and Constantine the Great.[1344] The cult of the god Sol was public and official, which is implied by the public sacrifices to the god, confirmed in the *fasti*. The iconography of Sol Invictus, besides the different influences in the theology of the cult, was unchanged through the entire period of the cult's existence – the god is presented as a naked young man with a radiate crown or rays around his head, sometimes with a cloak or dressed in a chlamys. Representations of the god dressed in military uniform are also known, as a clear implication of his dimension as a protector of Roman legions and soldiers, sometimes presented as being carried away by an eagle.[1345] The usual presentations of the god comprised only the image of his bust, with a paludamentum (chlamys), cuirass or consular toga, while in full figure he is usually shown standing or riding in a quadriga.[1346] Representations of Sol seated, riding a horse or a lion, are very rare.[1347] His characteristic attributes are a whip and a globe, while only from the 2nd century, Sol is presented with his right hand in the position of *ad locutio,* which is very frequent in the god's iconography from the 3rd and the 4th century.[1348] In his oration to the god Helios, Emperor Julian subordinated all other deities to the sun-god, as was done by his close associate, Praetextatus, who was *pontifex Solis* and stated that all gods were identified with the Sun.[1349]

The last rise of the god's cult happened during the reign of Constantine the Great, since the ruler considered himself a reincarnation of the divinity and, in that context, placed a sculpture of the sun-god bearing his name on the Roman Forum.[1350] Outside Rome, Constantine was respected as Sol Invictus' reincarnation. Therefore, in some cities, such as Termessos in Asia Minor, the emperor was called the 'All-

surrounded with rays appears. In 272 Aurelian issued the coins with legend ORIENS AVG, with an image of Sol in quadriga, whip and globe. In 273, Sol is presented holding a globe or/and a whip, with a right hand in the gesture of blessing and one or two captives beside his legs, Watson 2001: 83.

1337 Aurelian's temple dedicated to god Sol Invictus was according to ancient writers, one of the most lavish temples in Rome, dedicated to the god after the emperor's victories over Zenobia in 272 and Tetricus in 274. However, little is known about it, even its certain location is unknown. Beside god's temples in Circus Maximus and Quirinal, one *porticus Solis* was probably built in the southern part of the area Trastevere before 102, when its restoration was needed, Hijmans 2009: 483-487; Hijmans 2010: 388-396.

1338 First games in honour of Sol Invictus, after Elagabalus, were held in 274, probably to commemorate the god's temple. It is presumed that the games were held from 19 to 22 October, every four years, Halsberghe 1972: 144.

1339 Hijmans 2009: 504-505. S. Hijmans presumes a gradual rise in the social status of Sol's priests who were in the 1st and the 2nd century of a low social rank (a slave, a wine merchant), but in the 3rd century belonged to the upper class – a freedman and a senator, Hijmans 2010: 405-406.

1340 Certain Iulius Anicetus, who built a portico at Trastevere for god Sol at the beginning of the 2nd century, stated that he had to receive the permission of calatores for the construction. Another dedication dating to the 3rd century mentions calatores in the same capacity and is made to Iulia Mamea, with the permission of calatores, Rüpke, Santangelo 2017: 30-32.

1341 The legend *Soli Conservatori* appears also on the coins, with the image of god Sol handing the globe to Aurelian, as for example on the coins of Cyzicus, Watson 2001: 190.

1342 Aurelian was the first Roman emperor after Domitian, who called himself Deus Aurelianus, which is confirmed by a legend on the coins issued between 274 and 275, Ibid: 152-153. With proclaiming Sol Invictus for the god of military victory and peace, building him a lavish temple in Rome, founding the game in honour of god and new collegium of his priests, Aurelian actually clearly cut off all the allusions to the Syrian character of deity and emphasised his Roman nature, Ibid: 201.

1343 The coins with legends *Aeternitas Augusti*, *Conservatori Augusti* and *Soli Invicto*. Also legends like *Soli Invicto Comiti Augusti* (*Sol Comes Probi Augusti*) are known on the coins where the images of emperor Probus and sun god are presented, Halsberghe 1972: 164.

1344 The presentations of Sol with the legend *Deo et Domino Caro Augusto*, are known from the coins of the emperor Carus. Maximian issues the coins with the image of Sol with whip and legend *Oriens Augusti*, while Diocletian represents Sol with whip, globe and legends *Aeternitate Augustorum* and *Soli Invicto*. Maximian Daia very often showed images of Sol on his coins, with legends *Soli Invicto* and *Soli Invicto Comiti*, while Licinius even went to battles under the aegis of *Deus Sol Invictus*, Ibid: 164-166.

1345 Ibid: 126.

1346 Hijmans 2009: 518.

1347 Ibid: 72.

1348 Other attributes characteristic in Sol Invictus' imagery are a torch (or two torches), pedum, cornucopia, a thunderbolt, branch etc., Hijmans 2009: 73-74, 76-78.

1349 Pratextatus numbers deities like Apollo, Minerva, Liber, Mars, Mercury, Salus, Asclepius, Hercules, Serapis, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, the Zodiac, Nemesis, Pan, Saturnus, Iuppiter and Adad, who are identified with the Sun, Bloch 1945: 207-208.

1350 Because of his gratitude to Sol Invictus for the victory on the Rhine in 310, Constantine paid his respect to the god on a series of coins from that period, MacMullen 1987: 69-70.

The relief of Sol Invictus from Rome
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Corpus_Inscriptionum_Latinarum,_Vol_VI#/media/File:Musei_CapitoliniDSCF6734.jpg)

seeing Sun', *Ηλίω Παντεπόπτη*.[1351] Besides the goddess Victoria, Sol Invictus was one of the most important of Constantine's *dii militares* and he was very frequently presented on the emperor's coins with the legends *Sol Invicto Comiti*, *Comiti Augustorum, Soli Comiti Augustorum, Soli Invicto, Soli Invicto Comiti Domini Nostri* and *Soli Invicto Aeterno Augusto*.[1352] Constantine's ideology and close relationship with Sol Invictus are clearly displayed in the iconography of the triumphal arc in Rome, where the image of the god has a significant role. However, in 323, Constantine ceased to elevate and represent the deity in the official imperial ideology, which somewhat represents the beginning of the end of Sol Invictus' cult. The heirs of Constantine the Great, Constantine II and Crispus very rarely struck the god's image on their coins, and dedications to Sol Invictus on votive monuments also become rare. The cult of Sol Invictus was still venerated among Roman soldiers and civilians until the late 4th century, when the existence of the god's clergy is also attested.[1353] In the 5th century, St. Augustine constated that the cult of Sol Invictus still had many adherents, but confronted with a rival such as Christianity, the cult slowly disappeared.[1354]

1.2. The Cult of Sol Invictus in the Central Balkans

The cult of Sol Invictus is attested in the territory of the Central Balkans Roman provinces on epigraphic monuments and various kinds of archaeological monuments. The spread and development of Mithraism in the 3rd century, mainly in the Danube Limes localities, but also in larger urban centres such as Singidunum, Viminacium and Naissus, was sometimes intertwined so tightly with the cult of the sun god that on some epigraphic monuments in earlier literature it was quite difficult to establish whether the dedication was made

[1351] Wallraff 2001: 261.
[1352] The attitude towards the cult of Sol Invictus in official ideology can be observed from the presentations and legends in coins issued between 305 and 311, where the bust of Sol with aura and wreathed bust of Constantine with the legend *Comes Constantini Augusti* is shown, Halsberghe 1972: 168. On the coins from 313, a legend *Invictus Constantinus* appears, along with the image of the emperor's bust from a profile, behind which a profile of god Sol with a radiate crown can be seen, MacMullen 1987: Pl. II.
[1353] *CIL* VI, 1778.
[1354] Halsberghe 1972: 170.

to the god Sol or the god Mithras, who was also, as a sun god, referred to as *deus invictus*.[1355]

The first epigraphic monument dedicated to Sol Invictus was found near Osmakovo, in the wider territory of Niš (cat. 1).[1356] The text of the inscription shows that the dedication was made by Valerius Iucundus,[1357] whose name Valerius is very frequent on epigraphic monuments from the Central Balkans, unlike the cognomen Iucundus, which is found only on two votive monuments, from the southern parts of the Central Balkans.[1358] The epithet Invictus is attributed to the names of two more gods in the mentioned territory - Hercules and Mithras[1359] Unfortunately, no other information is known from the Osmakovo inscription that could imply the origin, profession or social status of the dedicant. However, thanks to the names of consuls, the votive monument can be precisely dated to 237.

The second votive monument dedicated to the 'Invincible Sun' comes from the locality of Pljevlja, however, the god is not only Invictus, but also *sacrum* (cat. 2).[1360] The epithet *sacrum,* which implies the sanctity of the deity, appears often with the name of Sol in other Roman provinces, like Pannonia Inferior, Rome, Raetia, Moesia Inferior, etc.[1361] The dedicant, Sextus Baberius Ianuarius, has a gentile name which is not known from any other locality in the Central Balkans area and it is quite rare outside the territory as well.[1362] Unlike the dedicant's gentilicium, the cognomen Ianuarius is very frequent.[1363] Unfortunately, as with the previous monument, there is no other data about Sextus' origin or profession, therefore, I can only suggest a dating of the Pljevlja monument to the 3rd century.

Two marble heads of the god Sol represent the only confirmation of the god's statuary representations in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans. The first fragmented statue of the god was found in Singidunum and shows a youth with a round face surrounded with wavy hair (cat. 18).[1364] The god's forehead is quite low, the nose is wide and the chin very large. His eyes and eyebrows are carefully modelled, unlike the shape of his face, which gives the impression of asymmetry, as a consequence of the crudely sculpted head's position (slightly inclined to the right side). The head of the god Helios/Sol is stylistically close to the Hellenistic sculpture of the 3rd century BC. Unlike preserved sculptures of Helios/Sol, where the god's usual attributes are present and his identification can be certain, in the case of the Singidunum bust this is somewhat more difficult. However, even the presence of rays around the deity's head do not have to mean that Helios/Sol is presented, because the god Apollo is presented in the same way. Comparing most of the known sculptures and statues of Helios/Sol, and the representations of the god on coins, the canonical image of the god is always as a young man with wavy hair with sometimes preserved rays of the Sun (or holes which confirm that Sun rays were, at some point, surrounding the head of the deity) or a halo instead of the rays. The Singidunum find is iconographically closest to the fragmented sculpture from the Archaeological museum in Istanbul, particularly in the way in which the facial features are modelled.[1365] The head of Helios/Sol from Singidunum can be dated to the first half of the 3rd century.

As could have been expected, since Viminacium is the site that has yielded so many beautiful sculptures

[1355] In his study *Sonnenkult und Kaisertum von den Severern bis zu Constantin I. (193-337 n. Chr.),* S. Berrens discussed the differences between the group of epigraphical monuments with the formulae *deus invictus*, *deus Sol Invictus Mithra*, *Sol Invictus Mithra* and the second group of monuments with the formula *Sol Invictus.* The author concluded that the first group of epigraphic monuments bears a clear Mithraistic context, while the other group of epigraphic monuments is dedicated to the god Sol.

[1356] I should mention here a fragmented votive altar from the wall of the church St. Dimitrius on the locality Mokra (vicinity of Bela Palanka, Remesiana), which inscription could be perhaps read as *S]oli (?)*, *IMS* IV: 106, num. 78. Because of the monument's fragmented state, which doesn't' allow precise attribution of the monument to the god Sol or Mithras, I chose to not include it into the corpus of the monuments dedicated to the god Sol. A similar applies to the fragmented inscription from Vidin, dedicated to Invictus Sol, but the rest of the monument is missing, *AE* 1966: 342.

[1357] Вулић 1931: 127, num. 282; Вулић 1933: 63, num. 187; IMS IV 107, n. 79.

[1358] The cognomen Iucundus is known from the votive monuments discovered on the localities fortress Kulič (built in the wall as spolia) and the locality Lopate, *IMS* II: 214, num. 317, *IMS* VI: 171, num. 222. Outside of Central Balans, Iucundus as a name and cognomen is very frequent on the territory of Italy and Rome, Africa proconsularis, Numidia, Gallia etc.

[1359] On Central Balkans' territory, the epithet Invictus is confirmed with the name of god Hercules, from two votive monuments found in Arčar and village Gazdare in the vicinity of Leskovac, Petrović 1968: 54, *IMS* IV: 122-123, num. 111. The epithet is also given to god Mithras on several monuments, *IMS* II: 74-77, num. 29-34; *IMS* III/2: 68-69, num. 10, 11, 134, num. 111.

[1360] Вулић 1941-48: 135, num. 297.

[1361] The epithet sacrum is confirmed on votive monuments from: Pannonia Inferior, *AE* 1937, 210; locality Lanego in Lusitania, *AE* 1973, 278; Oliva de Merida in Lusitania, *CIL* II, 807; Rome, *AE* 1984, 144, *CIL* VI, 700, 703, 710, 728, 740, 30941, 31139; Numidia, *AE* 1988, 1122, *CIL* VIII, 5143; locality Abodiacum in Retia, *CIL* III, 5774; Moesia Inferior, *CIL* III, 12468; Aquileia, *CIL* V, 764, 807; Africa prokonzularis, *CIL* VIII, 1329, 26499.

[1362] In other Roman provinces, the name Baberius is confirmed on votive monuments from: Rome, *CIL* VI, 200, 7685, 12448, 13444-13447, 19523, 34656, 35701; Numidia, *CIL* VIII, 16565; Italy, *CIL* IX, 360, *CIL* XIV, 250, 682, 4141, 4810.

[1363] Cognomen Ianuarius is on Roman Central Balkans known from the votive monuments discovered in: Medovište, *IMS* I: 146, num. 137; locality Čair, Kostolac, Viminacium and two monuments from Smederevo, *IMS* II: 90-94, num. 53, 122-123, num. 95, 129, num. 108; Ravna, *IMS* III/2: 112, num. 71; Scupi, Aračinovo, Bardovci, Banjani, *IMS* VI: 92, num. 69, 95, num. 74, 107-108, num. 96, 123, n. 12. In other Roman provinces, the cognomen is very frequent on votive monuments.

[1364] Tomović 1993: 110, num. 152, fig. 22.3.

[1365] A fragmented statue of god Sol, presents deity with chlamys over his shoulder. The god is presented with wavy hair, lower forehead, with the holes for the sun rays on his head, Hijmans 2009: 107-108, num. A1ab, Pl. 3.3.

and statues, another bust of the god Helios/Sol was found in Kostolac, Viminacium (cat. 19).[1366] Wavy hair encircles a youthful head of a young man with a low forehead, whose eyes are plastically modelled with oval eyebrows and thin lips. Unfortunately, as in the case of the Singidunum bust, there are no attributes of a halo or Sun rays that could help in a definitive identification of the god. However, what is undeniable is the iconographic similarity with the Singidunum bust, with the difference that the lips on Helios/Sol's head from Singidunum are fuller and the whole representation is more skilfully sculpted. The head of the solar god from Viminacium is also very similar to the bronze bust of Helios/Sol from Carnuntum, of which the probable date of its modelling is the 3rd century.

A bronze appliqué of Sol's bust, of unknown provenience, represents a quite summary work with only a recognizable diadem with radiately represented sun rays (*corona radiata*) as ornaments of circles and angles in the corona of the crown (cat. 20).[1367] Under the crown, the deity's hair is represented with incisions, as are the facial features. The neck is narrow and on two of the Sun rays, holes for fixing the appliqué can be seen. The appliqué is very similar to the appliqué of the god Sol from Szekesfehervar and an appliqué from Paris on which a *corona radiata* with seven sun rays is also presented on the deity's head.[1368] In the context of the summary presentation of the whole appliqué, the find of unknown provenience is reminiscent of the appliqué of the god Sol from Portland.[1369] It is a coarse and unskilful provincial work from the 3rd century.

The image of the sun god in the Central Balkans territory is most frequently presented on engraved gemstones, which is not surprising because, as S. Hijmans constates, gems are the most numerous finds of archaeological objects with the god's image, besides coins, in the whole Roman Empire.[1370] Thirteen finds of gems are known to date, with different iconographic types of the god's presentations, and one gem with a syncretistic image of Sol-Serapis. All three types of Sol's imagery represent three basic iconographic types of the god's representations, close to the classical and Hellenistic iconography of the god Helios.[1371] Unfortunately, what makes our presumptions about the gem's connotations difficult is the fact that many of them are of unknown provenience and completely without any information about them. Three main iconographic types of representations can be differentiated:

1. Presentations of Sol standing
2. Presentations of Sol driving a quadriga
3. Presentations of Sol's bust

Four gems belong to the first iconographic type of Sol's presentations, three of which are without any data regarding the possible place of their discovery, while the fourth was found in the locality of Veliko Gradište (cat. 3-6). On all four gems, the god Sol is presented similarly, as a standing young man, with a radiate crown on his head. He has a chlamys over the hand in which he holds a whip, while the other hand is raised in the *ad locutio* position. This iconographic type of Sol's representations can vary in the context of the presented attributes – sometimes it is only a globe or a whip or sometimes it is both. The god's representations belonging to this iconographic type are very close to the images of the god Helios in Greek art.[1372] The whip represents a mutual motif of both gods, the Greek Helios and the Roman Sol, while the attribute of the globe (not known in any of the gemstones from the Central Balkans), appears from the 1st century and until the 3rd century, and almost completely substitutes the motif of a whip on the majority of Sol's representations. On all four gems, the god is shown similarly, except that on one gem, besides the whip, he holds a thunderbolt as well.[1373] The closest iconographic analogies can be found in examples from Munich, Copenhagen and Hanover,[1374] while the stylistic characteristics suggest the 3rd century as a possible period of the gemstones' engraving.

The second iconographic type of the god Sol driving a quadriga is known on five gems, of which three were found without a context (cat. 10-11), while two gems were discovered in the locality of Guberevac in Kosmaj (cat. 8) and the locality Ušće near Obrenovac (cat. 9). The image of Sol is similarly represented on all five finds – the deity is standing in a quadriga, with a radiate crown on his head, a whip in one hand and other hand raised in the *ad locutio* position. Only on two gems (one of unknown provenience and the other from the locality of Ušće), is the god's hand not in the *ad locutio* position, but he is holding a cornucopia. Iconographic

[1366] Tomović 1993: 110-111, num. 153, fig. 19.2.
[1367] Величковић 1972: 80-81, num. 120, fig. 120.
[1368] Hijmans 2009: 394, n. K1.5, K1. 10.
[1369] Letta 1988: 597, num. 48.
[1370] Hijmans 2009: 368.
[1371] Ibid: 72.
[1372] The difference between the imagery of Greek Helios and Roman Sol is that Helios was usually presented dressed in chiton, while Sol was mainly shown naked. Of course, rare representations of naked Helios are known (for example on the gemstone from Vienna, Letta 1988: 599, num. 94). The images of god Sol dressed in chiton are more numerous, Hijmans 2009: 72, ft. 8.
[1373] I. Novović-Kuzmanović recognizes the attribute in Sol's hand as a thunderbolt, which would imply certain equitation between Sol and Jupiter, Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 115-116. The representations of the full figure of Sol with his right hand in the position of *ad locutio* appeared in the 4th year of Septimius Severus' reign, in 196 and they are very frequent during the 3rd and the 4th century, whether the god is presented as he stands, moves or rides quadriga, Hijmans 2009: 74, 91.
[1374] Letta 1988: 599, num. 97, 101, 103 (on the gemstone num. 103, Sol holds a sceptre as well).

representations of the god Sol standing and driving a quadriga mostly show the god naked (sometimes in a chiton or chlamys), holding a whip, globe or a torch in his hands.[1375] Analogies for the images of Sol with a cornucopia, seen on two of the gems, can be found on coins of some Asia Minor and Greek cities.[1376] Similar representations are known from gemstones in the Archaeological Museum in Firenza, Athens, Sofia and Cambridge.[1377] The suggested dating would be the 3rd century.

A single gemstone with an image of the god Sol riding a horse is, alas, of unknown provenience (cat. 12). The deity is shown riding a horse, moving towards the left, with a radiate crown on his head and a whip in one hand. The type of iconographic presentation of Sol riding a horse is rare and appears relatively late, around the 2nd century.[1378] Since this iconographic type is somewhat distinct from the three basic and most often presented iconographic types of the deity, S. Hijmans wonders whether its origin should be looked for in the symbiosis of iconographic elements of indigenous gods equated with the god Sol and the canonical imagery of Sol.[1379] Iconographic analogies are known on a gemstone from Aquileia, dated to the 3rd century, a gem from the Art Museum in Princeton, a gem from the Museum in Utrecht[1380] and the chalcedony gem from Silchester (Calleva Atrebatum).[1381]All gems belonging to the second iconographic type can be dated to the 3rd century.

The remaining three gems with representations of Sol show the deity's bust (cat. 13-15). The first gem was found in the locality of Vodice, while the other two gems are of unknown provenience. On all three finds Sol is presented in profile, with a radiate crown on his head. Iconographically, the gems found in the Central Balkans do not differ at all from all known finds discovered in other Roman provinces. This type of imagery sometimes presents Sol's bust with the bust of the goddess Luna or her substitute, the motif of a crescent, sometimes with a star on each end of the crescent.[1382] More rarely, Luna and Saturn or two figures of the goddess Victoria, who crown the god, are shown. Sometimes, different animals are presented with the bust of the solar god.[1383] S. E. Hijmans emphasises that most of the gems belonging to this iconographic type date to the earlier period, from the beginning of the Imperial period to the 2nd century. Iconographic analogies are numerous, but those closest to the examples from the Central Balkans are gems from Munich, Hanover and Vienna.[1384]

The only example of a gem with a syncretistic image of the bust of Sol/Serapis (cat. 16) is of unknown provenience and represents the god with a beard, a modius and a radiate crown on his head.[1385] The deity is shown in profile. Syncretistic images of the gods Sol and Serapis are known from Caracalla's coins (where Serapis is shown with his hand raised in the position of *ad locutio*), but also from Licinius' folles. A late series of bronze coins dated to the 4th century should be mentioned, issued in honour of the goddess Isis, during the reign of Julian Apostate, where a syncretistic presentation of Sol/Serapis wearing a modius is shown on the reverse.[1386] However, as the closest iconographic analogy to our gem, I would like to mention a red jasper gem of Heliosarapis from Vindolanda[1387] and a medallion from Turda, with the figure of Sol/Serapis wearing a modius on his head and holding a patera.[1388] The suggested period for the gem with the syncretistic image of Sol/Serapis would be the first half of the 3rd century.

A gem with an image of the bust of a Roman emperor is also known from some Central Balkans localities, which would represent *imitatio deorum Soli.* The bust of a Roman emperor, presumably Probus, shows a male

[1375] On the representations from gems, goddess Luna is usually shown driving a biga, while god Sol drives a quadriga with four horses. Beside this basic iconographic type, rare presentations of Sol driving a quadriga, with Luna's bust above horses' heads and a snake in front of the horses (on a gemstone from Naples), as the image os Sol surrounded with zodiac signs (on a gem of unknown provenience), Hijmans 2009: 325, num. H1da, 326, num. H1fa. The attribute of a torch is characteristic for goddess Luna and on the gems where two deities appear together, the goddess holds a torch and not Sol. The earliest gems with the attribute of a torch in Sol's imagery can be dated to the period of Septimius Severus or sometime earlier, Ibid: 76-77.

[1376] For example, on the coins from 120-184 BC from Rhodes, where on the avers Helios' bust is presented and on the reverse the motifs of cornucopia and caduceus, Ibid: 78.

[1377] Ibid: 323-325, num. H1c1, H1c12, H1c13, H1c15

[1378] Ibid: 382.

[1379] Quoting and analyzing nine gemstones with the image of god Sol riding a horse, S. E. Hijmans discusses the relief of the deity from Corbridge on which Sol is presented riding a winged horse. On the relief discovered inside the temple of Jupiter Dolichenus, Dioscuri and god Apollo are also shown. Since other finds from Corbridge comprehend the representation of Celtic goddess Brigantia (equated with Juno Dolichena), it is clear that indigenous and Roman deities were equally presented together on the locality. Therefore, it is not impossible to presume that in the representation of Sol riding a horse, iconographic elements from indigenous and Roman imagery are syncretized, Ibid: 382.

[1380] Ibid: 361, num. H12a1, H12a3, H12a4

[1381] Henig 2007: num. 33.

[1382] Hijmans 2009: 379.

[1383] The gem with the image of Sol's bust with Luna and Saturn is of unknown provenience and dates to the 1st or 2nd century, Ibid: 355, num. H9e. The gem with the image of Sol being crowned by two figures of goddess Victoria was found in the locality Kassel and dates to the 1st century, Letta 1988: 606, num. 202. The gem with the representation of Sol and a rabbit is known from the locality Debrecen, dating to the 3rd century, while the gem with the image of Sol and a rooster (above the rooster a lion is presented) is of unknown provenience (now in Berlin), dating to the 2nd or the early 3rd century, Ibid: 605, num. 188; Hijmans 2009: 353, num. H8c1.

[1384] Letta 1988: 598, num. 68-75.

[1385] It is an oval gem from opal, placed in a golden ring, Поповић 1992: 28, бр. 31.

[1386] On some of the bronze coins with the image of Sol/Serapis issued in honour of goddess Isis, face features of the emperor Julian can be recognized, Vagi 2000: 57, 569, 570-571.

[1387] Henig 2007: num. App. 148.

[1388] Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 453, бр. 370.

bust in profile with a radiate crown, a characteristic attribute of the god Sol.[1389]

A relief mirror with an image of Sol represents a grave good found in a woman's tomb in the locality of Viminacium (cat. 17).[1390] The mirror is made of bronze, silver and gold, by hammering on a mould and contains a relief scene of the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne. The god is represented half-nude resting on a klyne, while a semi-nude Ariadne (covered from the waist down) is presented in front of him (with the upper part of her body above the god), holding her lover in her left arm. Both figures have wreaths on their heads. A dancing Satyr dressed in a short chiton with a raised right hand is presented behind Ariadne, while behind Dionysus a bust of Helios/Sol is shown. The deity has a radiate crown on his head and is holding a whip in his left hand, thrown over his shoulder. Military symbols are shown in the scene as well – a shield, sword and cnemides in the bottom of the relief composition. The representations of the *hierogamy* or sacred marriage of Dionysus and Ariadne are known from reliefs, fresco-paintings, mosaics, but mostly from sarcophagi dated to the second half of the 2nd century.[1391] The act of *hieros gamos* symbolises a connection between a soul and the material world – a living soul who is leaving the material world and joining the world of the gods. The scene of the sacred marriage can also symbolise the existence of marital happiness in the Afterlife and immortal marital love between the spouses.[1392] Very similar representations of *hierogamy* to the relief from Viminacium's mirror are known from a votive altar in the Vatican, but also from a *phiale* from Borovo.[1393] The image of Sol represents a very interesting detail in the *hierogamy* scene, and to interpret its symbolism I should make a brief digression. The parts of military outfit (a shield, sword and cnemides) in the bottom of the composition could allude to Dionysus' victorious campaign in India – these motifs are frequently presented with the god.[1394] Perhaps the presence of Sol can be interpreted in the context of Dionysus' Oriental expedition, since the two gods are rarely presented together – the mythological link could be looked for in the fact that, like Dionysus, Sol was related to the cycle of life and death, while both deities shared a mutual solar character.[1395] A direct iconographic analogy with the scene of *hierogamy* in Viminacium's mirror is not known to me, but a similar find would be a bronze relief from Lyon, dated to the 2nd or 3rd century, where the bust of Sol with a radiate crown is presented between busts of the goddesses Diana and Juno. Above the goddesses' heads, standing figures of Dionysus and Pan are shown.[1396] In this context, I think a fragmented terracotta vessel from Čurug should also be mentioned. The terracotta vessel is ornamented with six medallions, horizontally presented. On one of the medallions, Sol is presented standing in a quadriga, with a radiate crown, an oval disc (or vessel) in his raised right hand and reins in his left hand. On two other medallions, mythical scenes from Dionysus' cult are shown.[1397] Therefore, a close geographical analogy where the two gods, Sol and Dionysus, are presented together again is discovered on a terracotta vessel found in Čurug, dated similarly to the Viminacium mirror, to the 3rd century. The stylistic characteristics of the Viminacium relief mirror from a woman's tomb imply the Asia Minor or Syrian origin of a very skilful artist. The luxurious object suggests a wealthy owner. Therefore, the woman in whose tomb the mirror was found was of a sound financial standing. Bearing in mind the whole context of the mirror's finding, the type of grave construction and other grave goods that were found in the tomb, the mirror can be dated to the first half of the 3rd century.

Here, I would like to mention two more archaeological finds, of which the first cult object was quite recently discovered and does not represent an epigraphic dedication or cult object related solely to the cult of Sol Invictus, but it does represent an important testimony of the apotropaic and eschatological character connected to, among other gods, Near Eastern solar deities. In 2015, in the locality of Rit in Viminacium, a thin gold plaque rolled up in a silver capsule was found in a grave (G-51), where the remains of a child of four to five years old were buried. The object was discovered below the child's lower jaw. The protective character of the object is more than clear, which is emphasised by three iron nails placed next to the child's head, whose function was also protective, since there is no link to a wooden structure in which the body was laid.[1398] Eleven vertical lines forming twelve columns were incised on the gold plaque, with a boat-like motif on the bottom part of it, which could, perhaps, represent a funerary boat for transferring the deceased to the underworld. The reverse side of the plaque is blank. Analysis of the text in the lines showed that divine names and epithets are presented on the plaque, which is typical for magical λόγος.[1399] The names Σεμεσειλαμ and Σασ(ε)ιβηλ are

[1389] Ibid: 170, num. 447, T. XXXVII.

[1390] Rankov 1980: cat. 49; Каровић 1995: 217–224, fig. 1–3, T. I/2; Спасић 2001: 162–165, num. 1, fig. 2–3; Спасић-Ђурић 2002: 72, fig.51; Пилиповић 2011: 214, num. 40.

[1391] Turcan 1966: 464, 521.

[1392] Ibid: 477.

[1393] Gasparri 1986: num. 193.

[1394] Каровић 1995: 222.

[1395] The close connection between two gods is also implied with an inscription from a monument erected by a priest of Dionysus and Sol, from Rome, *AE* 1960, 365.

[1396] Letta 1988: num. 268.

[1397] The fragmented terracotta vessel contains six medallions with presentations of god Sol, two mythological scenes with god Dionysus, a scene with Leda and a swan, a scene with Satyr with grapes and a scene of sacrifice in the altar, Јовановић 2004: 207-215.

[1398] For more details about the grave, its' orientation and burial see Ricl, Korać 2017: 164-170.

[1399] Two more unfortunately unpublished gold amulets are known from the Kosmaj mining region (with a Greek text in four lines) and

divine names connected to the solar gods – Σεμεσειλαμ, attested in papyri, gems and plaques, is sometimes interpreted in Hebrew as 'the eternal Sun', while Σασ(ε) ιβηλ is translated from Old-Babylonian as 'Sun, lord'.[1400] Other divine names attested on Viminacium's golden plaque are invoking: a magical name for the great god connected with the Aramaic word 'thob' (translated as 'good') and the Palmyrene supreme god, the magical name of the god Yahveh and divine names/epithets referring to the Egyptian Sun god and the dog star Sothis.[1401] M. Korać and M. Ricl concluded that the magical tablet from Viminacium has similarities with a lead tablet from Hermoupolis Magna (dated to the 3rd - 4th century) and a gold plaque found in a gold capsule from the Roman camp of Gelduba, Krefeld, in Germany.[1402] In their opinion, all three plaques contain the same text from a lost magical handbook, similarly represented in the finds, with a greater similarity in the divine names between the Viminacium and Hermoupolis Magna plaques.

During the Roman imperial period, similar tablets were not personalised and were produced for the protection of their owner. It is presumed that over 150 gold, silver, bronze and copper plaques of this type are known to date.[1403]According to other architectural and archaeological finds (two villae rusticae and parts of a necropolis), the Viminacium gold plaque with its magical text of a protective function is dated to the 3rd century.

The second find perhaps connected to the cult of Helios was also found in the locality of Rit in the Viminacium area and represents an epigraphic monument, unfortunately found in a fragmented state (the upper part is missing), on which, however, the inscription field is preserved with the text and an image of two raised hands under the inscription.[1404] Under the inscription field, the motif of an ascia is presented. The monument is dedicated to the priest Lucius Sevius Rufus by his wife Saenia Supera. Although the gentilicium Sevius (or Saevius) was widespread in Italy and the western provinces, because of the iconography, we can presume an Oriental origin of the deceased *sacerdos*. The motif of raised human hands on funerary monuments is well-known on funerary stelae from Phrygia and is

Monument of the priest Lucius Sevius Rufus
(photo-documentation: National Museum Požarevac)

connected to the protection of the god Helios, who is summoned to protect the deceased from harm and the deceased's monument from any damage[1405]. The image of raised hands could also be related to a plea to the god Helios to avenge a sudden, premature or violent death of a deceased[1406]. The motif of an *ascia* is also well known from Asia Minor monuments, like Anatolian sepulchral *stelae*, symbolising the protection of the grave by the gods, but also a sign that all funerary rituals have been performed. The motif can be interpreted differently – it can indicate and guarantee the ownership of the grave by the deceased and his/her family, it can symbolise salvation and life or could even be an emblem of members of a mystical sect of Oriental origin.[1407] Since we do not know to which god Lucius Sevius Rufus served, we can only presume his association with Helios in the period between 150 and 230, but also perhaps with some other god, like a local Phrygian Zeus, since the

the second golden amulet of unknown provenience (with two lines of either Greek or Latin), Ibid: 166.

1400 Ibid: 168.

1401 Ibid: 166-170.

1402 Ibid: 167.

1403 K. Dzwiza on her blog https://charakteres.com/archives/checklist-of-the-gold-silber-bronze-and-copper-lamellae.

1404 The funerary monument made of limestone (1.23x0.66x0.34 m) was found broken in half, between the villages of Kostolac and Kličevac, in the north of the legion camp of Viminacium, in secondary function for the tomb construction (now in the National Museum of Požarevac, inv. num. 1907/1908). The text of the inscription reads: *[---] / L (ucio) Sevio / Rufo s(a)c(erdoti) / mun(icipii) Ael(i) / Vim(inacii) vix(it) / ann(is) XLV / Saen(ia) Supe/ra coniug(i), IMS* II: num. 79.

1405 Cormack 2016: 85.

1406 Chaniotis 2004: 9 f.

1407 Rutgers 2000: 89; Wujewski 1991: 42.

motif of upraised hands is also known on monuments dedicated to Zeus Alsenos from the peasants' sanctuary in the territory of the Turkish village of Kurudere, near the ancient town of Phyteia.[1408]

A review of all known epigraphic and archaeological monuments of Sol Invictus from different Roman localities in the Central Balkans shows that they were mostly located in the Limes area and larger urban centres like Singidunum, Viminacium and Niš. The cult of the god is rarely confirmed in the interior of the territory and it may be presumed that the reason for this could be found in the cult of the god Mithras, who was already very favoured among the Central Balkan population, not only in urban areas, but in smaller centres in rural areas as well. The two epigraphic monuments dedicated to Sol Invictus, that is to Sol Invictus Sacrum, do not indicate under which aspect the god was venerated, except in his general function of the universal deity who brought victory, triumph and peace, but also protection to his adherents. The localities where the solar god's cult was epigraphically confirmed represent wider areas of centres where Roman soldiers or veterans were present. Therefore, the two dedicants of the Osmakovo and Pljevlja monuments could have been in active service or former soldiers who settled in the mentioned localities. Sol Invictus was the god who reflected the imperial ideology connected to military victories and triumph, which is confirmed not only on votive monuments, but also on numerous coin representation, like, for example, on Aurelian's coins from 274, where Sol holds a glob and approaches the goddess Concordia or Fides.[1409] The popularity of the god in the Roman army was not based only on his aspects of a victorious and invincible god, but also on his dimension of the pacificator, the god who brought peace and prosperity. Quite frequently, votive monuments with dedications to Sol Invictus and genii of Roman military units are discovered, as monuments dedicated to characteristic *dii militares*, as Mithra, Jupiter Dolichenus and Sol Invictus were.[1410] The sun god was also venerated as a celestial deity, designated with this aspect not only in votive monuments but also on coins, like, for example, on the coins of Serdica, where, together with the god's image, the legend *Sol Dominus Imperi Romani* is presented.[1411]

Returning to the cult of Sol Invictus in the Central Balkans, two facts must be underlined. The presence and popularity of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in the mentioned territory certainly somewhat suppressed the further development and popularity of Sol Invictus' cult in these Roman provinces, particularly among soldiers. In addition, the cult of Mithras, not only as a deity favoured in the army, but also as a celestial god, further suppressed the popularity of the sun god's cult. Nevertheless, epigraphic and archaeological monuments clearly show that the cult of Sol Invictus was favoured among Central Balkan inhabitants, soldiers and civilians alike, who respected the divinity as the source of light, energy, success, but also as an omnipotent protector and invincible guardian. The god's devotees believed in the invincibility of the deity, and in his protection from enemies and misfortune, which certainly lasted up to the 4th century, when pagan cults slowly disappeared after being confronted by a stronger rival, Christianity.

[1408] Drew-Bear, Thomas, Yildizturan 1999: num. 29, 31, 32, 34.
[1409] Watson 2001: 190.
[1410] Hoey 1939: 472; Speidel 1978a: 1179; *AE* 2005: 199.
[1411] Watson 2001: 190.

2. Dea Syria

2.1. The Cult of Dea Syria in Graeco-Roman culture

The cult of Dea Syria, evolved in a similar way to the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, in the context of a local cult that was promoted and favoured mainly by residents of Syrian origin, during the Roman period. However, the cult of the goddess stayed in the shadow of the cults of other Oriental goddesses, like Magna Mater and Isis, whose cults spread all over the Empire. Dea Syria is a Latin form of the Syrian name of the goddess Atargatis or Derceto (Δερκετώ), a deity of northern Syria, who was, together with her paredros, the god Hadad, venerated in her temple in Hierapolis.[1412] The name of the goddess represented the subject of discussions in scholarly literature. Thus, P. J. Morin thinks that in the name Atargatis, the names of two goddesses, Atar and Ateh, are syncretised,[1413] while H. J. V. Drijvers believes that the original name of the Syrian deity was Ateh, which meant 'the goddess Ateh'.[1414] Whatever the original name of the goddess was, Atargatis represented the supreme Syrian deity, who was, in the earlier period, a local goddess of fertility, venerated as the protectress of Ascalon, which is implied by her usual attribute in the earliest representations, a mural crown. The myth of the Syrian goddess is known from works of several ancient writers, such as Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Ovid, Lucian of Samosata, Polybios, Pausanias, etc., but a detailed description is offered only by Diodorus Siculus. He writes that the goddess Derceto fall in love with one of her worshippers, with whom she later had a daughter, Semiramis, but out of the shame that she had commited a sin, she killed her lover, left her child in the desert (where it was found and nurtured by doves) and threw herself into the lake of Ascalon.[1415] Lucius Ampelius in his *Liber Memorialis* tells a different version of the myth, by which the Syrian goddess was born from a fish egg, on which doves brooded until the goddess came out of it.[1416] The goddess Atargatis is also mentioned in the myth of the Syrian hero Ichthys, as his mother who threw herself in the lake of Ascalon and was swallowed by a fish.[1417] The images of a fish and a dove were powerful symbols of the goddess in her cult from the earliest period, about which we learn from Diodorus Siculus, who writes about doves that 'bring milk to the daughter of Derceto and feed her with it'. Cicero mocks certain Syrians because they respect a fish as a deity, while Arnobius states that Syrian gods and goddesses hatch from fish' eggs.[1418] However, the most detailed description of the iconography and the temple of the Syrian goddess is given by Lucian in his work 'De Dea Syria'.[1419] The author mentions that the goddess's temple is very old, even from the time of Deucalion, Prometheus' son, to whom one of the legends attributes the founding of the deity's sanctuary.[1420] Besides Hierapolis, the cult of the Syrian goddess was venerated in other localities where her temples existed, such as Palmyra, Edessa, Dura-Europos, Niha in Lebanon, etc.

Greek culture encountered the cult of Atargatis in the 4th century BC, perhaps even earlier, because Menander mentions the strange appearance of a Syrian who suffered from swollen legs and belly as a consequence of breaking the taboo of eating fish, the sacred animal of the goddess Atargatis. During the period of Hellenism, the form of the goddess's name as Dea Syria, Συρια θεά (θεος), appeared for the first time.[1421] The cult of the Syrian deity is confirmed in Cyprus in 333 BC, on an inscription in which a temple of Aphrodite Ourania equated with the Syrian goddess is mentioned and, in the same period, the goddess's cult is attested in the locality of Beroea in Macedonia, Phystion in Aetolia and in the Aegean (Cos, Thera, Scyros, Astypalaea, Nisyros and Syme).[1422] Around or before the 2nd century BC,

[1412] The name of Dea Syria is in Greek and Latin written sources known in different forms as Συρια θεός, Συρια θεά, ή θεος ή Συρια, Δειασυρία, Dea Syria, Syria Dea, Dea Suria, Suria Dea, Diasuria, Diasura, Dasyra, Iasura. All these names actually designate Greek and Latin forms of the Syrian name of Atargatis (Αταργατϊς, Ατάργάθη, Αταργάτη), Drijvers 1986: 355.

[1413] The name Atar is actually Aramean form of the name Astarte (Ashtart), Hörig 1984a: 1539.

[1414] Analysing the legends of Hierapolis coins with the image of goddess Atargatis, H. J. W. Drijvers concluded that the name of the deity appears in three forms – *th, tr th* and *trth,* so that Atargatis' name was probably only form *th,* while the syllable *tr* would be translated as 'goddess'. Therefore, the whole name of the goddess on Hierapolis' coins would mean 'goddess Ateh', Drijvers 1980: 88.

[1415] In one version of the myth it is the lake of Ascalon, in another version the lake of Hierapolis, but whatever lake was in question, the goddess's lower part of the body was transformed into a fish's tail. Diodorus Siculus mentions in his myth about the queen Semiramis, two important Atargatis' symbols – a fish and doves, Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History,* II. 4. 2-6.

[1416] *CCDS* II, 1972: 78.

[1417] Ibid: 97

[1418] Turcan 1996: 134.

[1419] Lucian, the presumed writer of *De Dea Syria* (Περι τθε Συριχε θεου), was born in Samosata, capital of Commagene. Since the distance between Samosata and Hierapolis was only 150 km, it can be assumed that Lucian visited the temple of Atargatis and that he was well acquainted with different versions of the goddess's myth, Dirven 1997: 153-179.

[1420] Lucian states that by the Syrian tradition, the founding of her temple in Hierapolis is connected to Deucalion, Prometheus' son, Strong 1913: 49.

[1421] *CCDS* I, 1972: 13.

[1422] In Smyrna there was a law that prohibited the consummation of

the cult of the goddess was established in Delos by the residents of Hierapolis, which is attested with numerous epigraphic monuments where the goddess's name is mentioned.[1423] In the Metroon in Piraeus, at the same time, the goddess of Hierapolis was venerated together with Cybele/Magna Mater.[1424]

In the 2nd century BC, Romans also came into contact with the cult of the goddess Atargatis, due to Syrian traders and slaves, who represented the majority of deity's devotees. On epigraphic monuments from Delos, the goddess's worshippers are mainly Roman residents who were freedmen or Roman merchants who travelled frequently, because of their professions, to Syrian towns.[1425] A monument discovered in Sicily attests the association of the Syrian goddess' devotees, whose cult was probably established there in the 2nd century BC, by Syrian traders.[1426] Sicily was a place of two significant rebellions related, in a way, with the Syrian goddess. The first rebellion, known as the First Servile War, happened in 135 BC, under the leadership of Eunus, a Syrian slave from Apamea, after he received visions from Atargatis (Eunus identifies the goddess with Emeter of Enna), that he would become a king.[1427] Of course, both rebellions were quickly quashed, but it is interesting that in both cases, thanks to the popularity of the goddess, for a brief period, a large number of people joined the revolt. It is presumed that the Syrian goddess had a sanctuary in Rome on the Janiculum, [1428] as her worshippers probably gathered in the Travestere district, near Porta Portese, where residents from Israel, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria lived.[1429] On rare inscriptions from Rome, the Syrian goddess is mentioned under the names *Isaura* and *Diasura.*[1430]

During the whole of Antiquity (except for the short period of Nero's reign), the cult of Dea Syria was not so favoured, nor did it have as many adherents as the cults of Magna Mater and Isis, which was probably due to the fact that the cult of Magna Mater was officially recognised and enjoyed support from Roman emperors (including all possible benefits), while the cult of Dea Syria, although it had many devotees, was never officially recognised.[1431]

The iconography of Dea Syria from the Graeco-Roman period is very similar to the imagery of the goddess Magna Mater. She is presented riding a lion or seated on a throne, flanked by one or two lions.[1432] The goddess is almost always wearing a *corona muralis* (representing the city protecting goddess) or a high polos (on whose top a crescent is sometimes presented), with a long veil, holding some of her usual attributes, such as a mirror, distaff, glass, sceptre, ears of wheat or a pomegranate.[1433] Her characteristic symbols, motifs of a fish and a dove, are also frequently presented, like on a monument from Transjordan, where the goddess is presented with two fish over her head, or a relief from Heliopolis where her throne is supported by tritons.[1434] Sometimes, she is presented with an eight-ray star, as an allusion to her association with Venus' star.[1435] Her usual animal companions are lions, but also bulls (the animals of her paredros Hadad).[1436] On several sculptural and relief presentations, the goddess is presented with her hand

the sacred fish dedicated to Atargatis, Turcan 1996: 134-135.

[1423] The clergy of goddess Atargatis on Delos were Syrians, but from the 2nd century BC, only Athenians are allowed to be deity's priests and honour her under the name *Hagne Aphrodite*, that is chaste and holy Aphrodite, Ibid.

[1424] Morin 1960: 63-70.

[1425] E. Will thinks that particularly citizens of Campania were well acquainted with the cult of Dea Syria, because of their trading business with Syrian towns, while quite a large number of goddess's devotees in Delos were slaves, Will 1985: 140 etc.

[1426] Sfameni Gasparro 1973: 162-164.

[1427] The First Servile War started in 139 BC, under the leadership of slave Eunus, who proclaimed himself a king of the island. Another revolt happened soon after, in Agrigento, whose leader joined Eunus and soon gathered an army of around 200 000 slaves. But in 132 BC, the revolt was squashed and thousands of slaves were killed, Sammartino, Roberts 2001: 33 etc.

[1428] In a compilation 'The Chronographs of 354' assembled in the late 353 or early in 354, a temple of Dea Syria (*templum Iasurae*) is mentioned in the period of Alexander Severus, located on the right bank of Tiber, in region XIV Transtiberim, Calzini Gysens 1997: 264.

[1429] Turcan 1996: 141. E. Will, however, thought that the remains of the temple of Syrian deities in the hill Janiculum were only the ruins of Jupiter Heliopolitanus' temple and not of Dea Syria's sanctuary, *CCDS* I, 1972: 92.

[1430] On the votive monument from Rome, the priest of goddess Dea Syria is mentioned as *gallus Diasuriae, CIL* VI, 32462. Also, in historical sources, a *templum Iasurae* which was presumably located in the area of Trastevere, is cited. It is possible that in the mentioned area, Dea Syria's temple really existed, since in the area the cult of Nymphae was confirmed, who were as Syrian goddess, protectresses of springs, Calzini Gysens 1997: 263-264.

[1431] Suetonius states that Nero 'despised all cults, with the sole exception of that of the Syrian Goddess and even acquired such a contempt for her that he made water on her image', Svuetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars,* 56.1.

[1432] The representations from Hierapolis' coins from the late 4th and early 3rd century, show the goddess with a lion or as she rides a lion, between two sphinxes or enthroned, usually with a branch or a glass in her hand, sometimes with a sceptre. On these images, Dea Syria is *potnia theron*, the mistress of life and the one who gives life and protects, Drijvers 1980: 88 etc.

[1433] On Hierapolis' coins from the 2nd and the 3rd century, Dea Syria is presented with different attributes like tympanum, ears of wheat, distaff, mirror, sceptre, leaf etc., Drijvers 1986: 358. The goddess was presented with a pomegranate (a symbol of fertility) on the locality Tannur, Hörig 1984a: 1563-1564. In the opinion of O. Brendel, the attribute of distaff implies the goddesse's aspect of the mistress of faith, cosmic mother and celestial queen, who has power over the living ones, but also over dead ones, Brendel 177: 50 etc. However, I. Skupinska-Lovset suggests that the attribute of a distaff in Dea Syria's imagery could be differently interpreted – it could be a symbol of time passing and ceased life, but it could be also the allusion to the profession of the deceased, since Syria was an important trader of fabrics. If the motif of distaff would be presented on the monument of a woman, it could symbolize her virtues as a chaste daughter or wife, Skupinska –Lovset 2005: 382-383

[1434] Morin 1960: 9-11.

[1435] As H. J. W. Drijvers states, Atargatis' priests wore conical cap ornamented with an eight-pointed star as the allusion to the goddess as Venus star, Drijvers 1980: 31.

[1436] In the representations of Dea Syria, a bull is a sacred animal of god Hadad or his substitute. The scenes show Hadad with a bull and Atargatis with a lion, like the relief from Dura Europos, relief from Beirut, a votive monument from Arime, relief from Aquincum etc., Drijvers 1986: 356-357, num. 12-32.

Relief of Atargatis from Dura Europos
(https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/6834)

raised in the position of *benedictio latina,* as a sign of her protection and blessing.[1437] Certain variations in Dea Syria's iconography can be attributed to her equitation to a very large number of local goddesses, but also goddesses belonging to the Asia Minor, Egyptian, Greek and Roman pantheon.

Most frequently, Dea Syria was equated with Magna Mater and Artemis of Ephesus and Isis, but also with the Greek goddess Tyche and the Roman goddess Venus.[1438] A votive monument found in the locality of Carvoran in Roman Britain proves that the Syrian goddess was also equated with Ceres.[1439] Epigraphic monuments show that, besides the mentioned goddesses, Dea Syria was also equated with the Roman goddess Diana.[1440]

The epithets of the Syrian goddess imply that she was honoured as *Κυρία,* that is, as a mistress of her worshippers' lives and destinies but also as an *Omniparens*.[1441] I have already mentioned the goddess' function as a protectress of cities and city walls as *πολιουχος*,[1442] while her representations with fruits and ears of wheat confirm her role as a goddess of fertility and fecundity and a protectress of Nature and its harvest.[1443] On a votive monument from Palestine, Dea Syria is venerated as *επήκος*, the one who carefully listens to the prayers of her adherents. Like Magna Mater, the Syrian goddess was also *potnia theron* – the mistress of wild animals and the wilderness, but also *Urania* and, as votive monuments from Pannonia attest, *Caelestis,* that is, a celestial deity.[1444] She was considered the protectress of thermal springs, rivers and seas, thus, ceremonies in her cult were related to processions to and from water. Merchants, particularly those involved with river and sea transport, venerated the goddess not only as the one who protected them and guarded them, but also as a deity who guaranteed them success in their tasks.[1445] Certain votive monuments, like a funerary monument from the locality of Niha in Lebanon, mention Dea Syria's prophetess Hochmaea, indicating that the goddess was respected as a prophet too.[1446]

[1437] For example on the statue from Aleppo, dated to the 2nd or 3rd century, on which Dea Syria is shown with her raised hand in the position of *benedictio latina*, on relief from Arima (dated to the same period) where the goddess is symbolically presented in the shape of a hand with an open palm or on the relief from Heliopolis, where the deity is presented beside Jupiter Hadad and Mercury on the throne, with ears of wheat in the left hand and the right hand raised in the position of blessing, Drijvers 1986: 355, num. 2, 356, num. 13, 357, num. 34, 358.

[1438] As I already mentioned, Dea Syria was venerated in the Metroon in Piraeus and the same priest could serve in the cults of both goddesses, Turcan 1996: 140. A representation of an enthroned goddess with a basket of fruits in her lap and doves around her discovered on the wider territory of Arles, is interpreted as a syncretistic presentation of Magna Mater and Atargatis, Turcan 1972: 117-118. The close relationship between Dea Syria and Artemis of Ephesus is confirmed in Lucian's work, but also with the mutual attribute of distaff.

[1439] *RIB* I, 1791. The dedicants of another votive monument from Carvoran, which is dedicated to the goddesses Dea Syria and Dea Hamia, were the soldiers of the Syrian cohors, Harris, Harris 1965: 96.

[1440] A votive monument dedicated to Diana Syria, *CIL* IX, 4137.

[1441] Perdrizet 1931: 267-268.

[1442] Turcan 1996: 133. As the protectress of Edessa and city walls, Atargatis was frequently presented as Tyche, for example on Caracalla's coins, Drijvers 1980: 84.

[1443] In goddess's temple in Hierapolis, numerous terracottas were discovered presenting her as fertility goddess, Drijvers 1986: 357; In the vicinity of goddess's temple in Hierapolis, fertility symbols and objects in the shape of phallus were found, clearly implicating her role as a deity of fecundity, Krill 1978: 35.

[1444] *AE* 1903, 58; *CIL* III, 10393, 10574, 10964, 10973. Macrobius describes that the statue of goddess Atargatis had rays around her head, representing her as a celestial deity, Turcan 1996: 143.

[1445] Cumont 1905: 1593.

[1446] The text of a funeral monument from the locality Temnine et Tehta (Niha) of a veteran who mentions a virgin prophet Hochmaea, of Dea Syria Nihatena, indicates goddess's worshipping as a prophet

Relief of Atargatis from Khirbet el Tannur
(http://www.sourcememory.net/veleda/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/FishDeaKhirbetTannurTr.jpg)

The text of the same funerary monument tells us that Hochmaea, the goddess' devotee, refrained from bread and sexual intercourse (she is 'a virgin of the goddess Atargatis'), which could imply some kind of sexual purity among the deity's ritual practices.[1447] Atargatis was also considered a lunar goddess, which is implied by the sometimes presented motif of a crescent on her crown, but also as a solar deity when she was shown with rays around her head.[1448] As Macrobius suggests in his writings about the goddess as the personification of Earth, a votive monument from Corbridge dated to the 3rd century attests that Dea Syria was really regarded as a universal deity, who encompassed both the mundane and celestial spheres.[1449]

The main temple of Dea Syria was in Hierapolis and, as I have already mentioned, Lucian offers a detail description of it, since archaeological excavations have never been completed.[1450] The author testifies about the lavishness of the goddess' temple and that it had more than 300 priests called *galloi,* who were eunuchs and led by the main priest. In honour of the two supreme deities of the sanctuary, the god Hadad and the goddess Atargatis, the clergy sacrificed to the goddess twice per day a fish (during her festivities, a bull, a ram and a goat were sacrificed),[1451] followed with the music of flutes and percussion instruments. Like Magna Mater's *galli*, Dea Syria's *galloi* were no less intriguing and likely made ancient writers raise their eyebrows – Lucian writes about their falling into a trance, self-mutilation and self-castration, while they ecstatically danced during the goddess' festivities.[1452] In his novel

deity as well, *AE* 1964, 64a; Hajjar 1990: 2262.

[1447] Lightfoot 2002: 81;

[1448] Cumont 1905: 1594.

[1449] Macrobius, *Saturnaliae,* I. 19-20; Two altars found at Corbridge attest the cults of Herakles of Tyre, *RIB* I, 1129 and Dea Syria, to whom a dedication is made in Greek Hexameters, *RIB* I, 1124. It is presumed that the cult was probably brought to Corbridge by oriental auxiliaries, Harris, Harris 1965: 106-108.

[1450] Lucian describes Dea Syrias' temple in Hierapolis that it was situated on a hill, with two walls around it and with a monumental gate flanked with two high columns (phallobatai), which Lucian connected with the phallic cult of god Dionysus. The author mentions that a certain number of goddess's devotees climbed those columns and stayed on them even for eight days, communicating from the height of 55m with the gods. There was a big altar inside the temple, where twice per day goddess's priests sacrificed in honour of the deity. The inside of the sanctuary was divided into two parts and there was a statue of god Hadad on the throne, flanked with the figures of bulls and a statue of Dea Syria enthroned, flanked with the figures of lions. Lucian also mentions the third empty throne, which was dedicated to the cult of the Sun god, Strong, Garstang 1913: 65 etc.; Turcan 1996: 193.

[1451] The doves and fish were sacred animals of Dea Syria. After the sacrifice to the goddess, only her priests could eat the fish, Strong, Garstang 1913: 65; Turcan 1996: 194.

[1452] Lucian describes that the main priest of goddess Atargatis in her

'The Golden Ass', Apuleius offers the best description of the Syrian goddess' priests, who went from place to place begging in the name of the deity, danced and self-mutilated with knives.[1453] The self-castration of the Syrian goddess' *galloi* is confirmed in Edessa too, in honour of the deity[1454] and it is clear that because Dea Syria's priests either begged or self-mutilated and self-castrated, they were very similar to Magna Mater's *galli*.[1455] Beside the temple of Dea Syria in Hierapolis, a sacred pond with fish existed (as in Edessa and most goddess' sanctuaries) and a festival in the goddess' honour called 'Descent to the Lake' involved taking all sacred objects from goddess' temple to the lake.[1456] As a result of the astonishment and abomination which the self-castration of the Syrian goddess' priests caused, King Abgar in Edessa proclaimed a law that prohibited self-castrating in the name of Atargatis, with the punishment of cutting a hand off those who broke the law.[1457]

Epigraphic and archaeological material shows that most of Dea Syria's adherents were Syrian merchants, slaves, but also soldiers who served and were stationed in different parts of the Roman Empire. On votive monuments dedicated to Dea Syria, their status varies, which shows that goddess' worshippers encompassed those from ordinary soldiers to commanders of military units or veterans. A very interesting testimony of the close relationship between soldiers and Dea Syria as Tyche of Dura-Europos, is represented in a fresco from Dura-Europos' temple of Palmyrene gods, dedicated not later than 239, by Julius Terentius, a tribune of the Cohors XX Palmyrenorum.[1458] Unlike the cults of other Syrian deities, the cult of Dea Syria never took a firm hold in the western provinces of the Roman Empire, unlike in northern Syria, where it had a strong influence and where the goddess' devotees paid their respect to her in the 4th century as well, as Macrobius confirms, while in the main centre of deity's cult, Hierapolis, traces of her veneration were present even until the 6th century.

2.2. The Cult of Dea Syria in the Central Balkans

The cult of the Syrian goddess Atargatis, known in the Roman period as Dea Syria, is confirmed with only one certain epigraphic monument and possibly another votive monument, both discovered in the southern parts of the Central Balkans territory. Similar to the cult of the goddess Artemis of Ephesus, the absence of more Dea Syria monuments in the Roman provinces of the Balkans can be explained by the equitation of the divinity with the more favoured goddess Magna Mater.

A votive monument dedicated to Dea Syria was discovered in the vicinity of Skoplje (Scupi) and it is a marble *tabella ansata* on which a dedication is made to the Syrian goddess (cat. 1).[1459] Unfortunately, the name of the dedicant is not preserved (B. Dragojević Josifovska considers, perhaps, the name Regulus?), but, from the text of the inscription, we learn that he was from the north of Italy, more precisely, from Verona. The reason for erecting the monument to Dea Syria was the building of her temple, which the dedicant did at his own expense. The votive monument dedicated to the Syrian goddess is even more important because it represents the earliest attestation of the name of the

temple in Hierapolis was differentiated from the rest, by his purple clothes and golden tiara on his head. Other priests were dressed in white and Lucian also states that the sacrifice to god Hadad, was performed in silence, while the sacrifices for the goddess were performed with singing and music in her honour. After the self-castration, the priests were forbidden to step into the temple for seven days, Strong, Garstang 1913: 78-84. The myth about Stratonice explains the custom of self-castration – Lucian writes that the step-son of Assyrian queen Stratonice was so in love with her, that he got sick. The doctor told him to stop loving her to feel better and to leave her, along with the kingdom, to his son, what his step-son does. Not long after, Stratonice dreamt that she got the order from Hera to build a temple in Hierapolis and soon she goes to Hierapolis, accompanied by one of the most beautiful young men, Combabus. Combabus unhappy because he'll be travelling with a beautiful goddess, in whom he feels that he'll fall in love, in the state of a disturbed mind, self-castrates himself. Upon her arrival at Hierapolis, Stratonice falls in love with Combabus and one evening when they share their emotions, Combabus admits what he did out of his love for her. From then on, Lucian says that the priests of the Syrian goddess imitate Combabus in their wish to show their love for the goddess, Ibid: 57-65.

[1453] Apuleius describes Dea Syria's priests very detailly – they were dressed in long dresses, wore make-up, had small turbans on their heads, and some of them even dyed their hair. They had characteristic yellow shoes and the custom to go from place to place and beg in the goddess's name. They performed ecstatic dances and they mutilated themselves and bit themselves or injured themselves with knives, Turcan 1996: 138.

[1454] Lightfoot 2002: 73.

[1455] Syrian goddess's galloi also as Magna Mater's priests, fell into ecstasy during the ritual of initiation, with the music of auloi, tympana and cymbals, dancing and hurting themselves with knives and whips. After their self-castration, they no longer wore a male dress, but women's clothes and did women's chores, Ibid: 77, 82.

[1456] There was another festival in Dea Syria's honour known as the 'Fire' or 'Lamp' festival, during which goddess's adherents cut trees, put them in the courtyard and hung live animals with gold and silver artifacts on them. In a particular moment, they would burn them, Benko 2004: 57.

[1457] Syrian writer Bardaisan states that in the period of Abgar's rein in Edessa, the mentioned law was proclaimed,, Millar 1993: 475.

[1458] A well-known wall painting on plaster from the lower register on the northern wall of the pronaos of the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods (or Temple of Bel) in Dura-Europos. Julius Terentius is presented sacrificing to three Palmyrene gods (Iarhibol, Aglibol and Arsu), Tyche of Palmyra and Tyche of Dura, accompanied by the members of his regiment and a priest Themis who observes Julius Terentius while he sacrifices, Dirven 1999: 123, 187, 304-305, Pl. XIII; Kaizer 2006: 151-159.

[1459] In the context of the finding of marble tabella ansata, another votive monument should be mentioned: in 1948. year, a limestone votive monument (0,8x0,68x0,68m), was discovered in the same place where the marble tabella ansata dedicated to the Syrian goddess was found, that is in the place of the presumed temple of Dea Syria. Unfortunately, today it is lost. The name of the deity to which the votive monument was dedicated is damaged, but some authors restored it as Dea Syria: De[ae Syriae] / Aureli(us) / voto lib(ens) / posuit NO/SEMPRIO(?) / et I INFORT(?), AE 1984, 748. The author B. Dragojević-Josifovska also thinks that it is possible that the monument was dedicated to Dea Syria, *IMS* VI, 58, num. 6.

colonia Scupi (*colonia Flavia felicis Dardanorum*), which was, until the monument's discovery, known only by the abbreviation F. F. D., from two monuments found in the localities of Bardovci and Radišani.[1460] Another interesting detail is presented in the way that the word *duumvir* is written, referring to Roman coins. Since the building of the temple was quite an expensive endeavour, we can presume that the dedicant, probably of Syrian origin, was quite a wealthy resident of Scupi. The votive monument is dated to the end of the 1st century.[1461]

Another votive monument which is also possibly dedicated to Dea Syria is, again, a marble *tabella ansata*, found in the fortress of 'Kale' in Skoplje, but, unfortunately, in a very fragmented state (cat. 2). Since only a few letters of the inscription were visible, B. Dragojević-Josifovska suggested they originally read as the words *Sanctissimae Deae Syriae*. If this assumption is accepted, then this would be first ever known monument in the whole of the Roman Empire where the goddess has the epithet Sanctissima. This epithet, which designates the most sacred person or deity, was usually added to the names of goddesses such as Caelestis, Minerva or Venus or to the names of Roman empresses.[1462] Analysis of currently known inscriptions dedicated to the Syrian goddess has shown that her name is usually mentioned without any epithets, and if there is an epithet, it is either *sacra* or the word *Mater*.[1463] Since there is no other information which would allow suggestions regarding the dedicant's origin or profession, analogous to the monument from Dolno Nerezi, dedicated to the goddess, this monument would also be dated to the end of the 1st century. Unfortunately, today, both monuments are lost.

Here, I think it is very important to mention the third monument connected to the cult of Dea Syria, but also to the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus (cat. 3).[1464] Although, the monument in question is not dedicated to the goddess, it confirms the presence of her priest on the Danube Limes up to the middle of the 3rd century. The funerary monument was found during archaeological excavations in the Danube Limes locality of Glamija I (in the village of Rtkovo), in 1982, inside the Late Antique smaller Roman fortification (*burgum*).[1465] The only preserved part of the limestone stele is its middle part with an intact inscription, while the upper and the lower parts of the monument are, unfortunately, missing and it can't be presumed whether the stele contained some iconographical motifs/scenes. The monument is dedicated to the Manes (the spirit-gods, the spirits of the dead) in memory of Julius Apollinaris, the priest of the gods Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria. From the dedicant's name *Julius Apollinaris,* we can only presume his origin from the Hellenised East, which is suggested by the name Apollinaris.[1466] The name *Apollinaris* has been confirmed in several Danube Limes localities, such as Taliata, Viminacium, Aquincum, Burgenae, Sirmium and Ritium, which is not unusual since many individuals employed in military service stationed on the Danube Limes or persons who were in civilian service, were of Greek or Eastern origin.[1467] P. Merlat considered that the name *Apol(l)inaris*, known from a few monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus, was a name of Graeco-Oriental origin, while M. Speidel referred to the name *Apollinaris* as a name that worshippers of Jupiter Dolichenus 'often bore in honour of Apollo'.[1468] Elaborating on the important role of the priesthood in the cult of Jupiter Dollichenus, M. Speidel writes that priests were usually of Oriental origin, with names like Marinus, Aquila, Barhadados and Apollinaris.[1469] The name *Apollinaris* as the name of Dolichenus' priest is known from a votive monument from Narona (dedicated by two priests, Flavius Faladus and Domitius Apollinaris),[1470] a bas-relief from *dolichenum* on the Aventine[1471] and from a monument found in Corbridge, where the dedicant Apollinaris was a centurion of the legion VI Victrix and possibly a priest of the god's cult

[1460] *IMS* VI: 74, num. 42, 78, num. 46.
[1461] Ibid: 37.
[1462] The epithet Sanctissima is attributed to the name of goddess Caelestis on the monument from Africa proconsularis, *AE* 1904, 17, in Leptis Magna *CIL* VIII, 22; in Italy *CIL* XI, 1282, *CIL* V, 3438; with the name of goddess Diana in Dacia *AE* 1959, 330; with the name of goddess Terra Mater in Rome *CIL* VI, 771; with the name of Magna Mater in Africa proconsularis *CIL* VIII, 4864; with the names of Roman empresses in Dacia *AE* 1998, 1092, 1093, 1095, 1104, in Lusitania *CIL* II, 110, 4607, *AE* 1930, 150, in Moesia Inferior, *CIL* III, 14211, in Rome, *CIL* VI, 1092, 1095, 1096, 40763, 40684; in Asia, *AE* 1914, 80.
[1463] An interesting exception is a votive monument from Apulum which is dedicated to *Dea Syria Magna Caelestis* by her priest Flavius Barhadadi, Horig 1984a: 1573. Votive monuments on which a dedication is made to *Dea Syria* without any epithet are known in Pannonia Inferior, *AE* 1982, 803, Syria *AE* 1947, 142, *AE* 1955, 85, *AE* 1960, 226, *AE* 1964, 64a, Dacia, *CIL* III, 7864, *AE* 1944, 50, *AE* 1960, 226, Roman Britain, *RIB* 1791, Italy, *AE* 1993, 500-501; the dedication to *Dea Syria sacrum* is known from Syria, *AE* 1905, 29; dedications to *mater Syriae* are known from Rome *CIL* VI, 30970, Italy, *CIL* IX, 6099. I should mention a votive monument from Dacia on which, in the opinion of S. Sanie, Syrian goddess is perhaps mentioned by the epithet *Regina*, Sanie 1989: 1254, num. 43.
[1464] Since the monument has been published by the author of this book, only the concise review will be presented, Gavrilović Vitas 2019a.
[1465] The stele was used as *spolia,* in the south-western corner of the late-antique fortress' wall, Gabričević 1987: 143.
[1466] The nomen *Julius* is very common in the imperial period, while the cognomen *Appolinaris* is probably Greek by origin (there are opinions in the literature of its Latin origin as well), Tuck 2005: 46.
[1467] Taliata, *IlJug* II, 477; Viminacium, *IMS* II, 138; Aquincum, *CIL* III, 10498, *CIL* XVI, 136; Burgenae, *CIL* III, 10243; Sirmium, *AE* 1994, 1403; Ritium, *CIL* III, 10243a, 10243b.
[1468] P. Merlat names several forms of names derived from the name Apollo, among which is the name *Apollinaris*, Merlat 1951: 397. M. Speidel writes about the 'Dolichenian Pantheon', that is of the gods who were included into the Dolichenian circle of gods. In his opinion, one of these deities was the god Apollo, who appears with Jupiter Dolichenus on the altar from the Aventine *dolichenum* and in the relief from the temple at Corbridge, Speidel 1978: 23-24.
[1469] Speidel 1978: 46.
[1470] Merlat 1951: num. 55; *CCID*: num. 124.
[1471] Merlat 1951: num. 190; *CCID*: num 371.

as well.[1472] An interesting detail, however, about the funerary stele from the locality of Glamija is that the dedicant, Julius Apollinaris, is not only a priest of the god Jupiter Dolichenus, but also a priest of the divine couple – the god Jupiter Dolichenus and his paredra Dea Syria. The pairing of Jupiter Dolichenus with the goddess Juno Dolichena is not infrequent and is known from epigraphic dedications, as well as from statuary finds.[1473] However, the pairing of Jupiter Dolichenus with Dea Syria is very rare and obviously based on a much older model of the partnership made between the Syrian god Hadad and the Syrian goddess Atargatis.

As M. Blömer points out, the cult's continuity between the ancient storm god Hadad from the Iron Age and Jupiter Dolichenus can be presumed as an unbroken ritual practice, which implies religious continuity.[1474] However, can the same be assumed for Juno Dolichena regarding the connection between her and the goddess Atargatis/Dea Syria (with a probable degree of influence of other local goddesses, like Kubaba)? P. Merlat and R. Turcan thought that similar to Jupiter Dolichenus, his paredra Juno Dolichena was of Syrian or Syrio-Hittite heritage – like the goddess Hebat (Hepet) associated with Teshub, Juno Dolichena was presented standing on the back of a hind, a goat, a deer, and sometimes a lioness, wearing a *calathus* or a diadem on her head, veiled, holding a sceptre, a *patera* or a mirror. Here is important to mention a basalt stele dated to the 1st-2nd century, discovered in 2007 on a sacred area in the locality of Dülük Baba Tepesi, representing the divine couple of Doliche, analogous to the deities' representations from the Iron Age, which could answer the previously considered question. Both deities are represented standing on the backs of their cult animals – the male deity stands on a bull's back, while the female deity stands on the back of a stag.[1475] E. Winter concludes that the analysis of the

Relief of Hadad and Dea Syria from Dura Europos (https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/4217)

divine couple's iconography from Doliche's stele, particularly the image of the goddess, implies that traits of the goddesses Kubaba and Atargatis/Dea Syria are incorporated in the iconography of the supreme female deity of Doliche. Additional finds from the cult space of Dülük Baba Tepesi, dated to the period from the 1st to the 2nd century, such as the representation from a votive altar of a goddess similar to Dea Syria or the representation of a doe on another votive altar found in the locality, also contribute to the hypothesis regarding a local version of Atargatis in Doliche, who was worshipped alongside Hadad of Doliche in the Roman period and was known as Jupiter Dolichenus.[1476] As M. Blömer notices, with the Roman domination over Doliche and the spread of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, over time, the iconography of the god changed and

[1472] *CCID*: num. 271; *CCID*: num. 565; Jolliffe 1941: 36-61; M. A. Marwood thinks that the name *Apollinaris* of the dedicant of the Corbridge monument could imply his service as a priest of Dolichenus' cult, because serving soldiers could be at the same time in active military service and priests of the Syrian god (successfully argued previously by M. Seidel, Speidel 1978: 46 etc.), Marwood 1984: 322.

[1473] *CIL* 3, 1128; *CIL* 13 7411; *CIL* 13, 11779a, b; *AE* 1956, 210; *AE* 1920, 60; *CIL* 6, 465; *CIL* 6, 367; *AE* 1940, 73; *AE* 1940, 79; *AE* 1940, *AE* 1998, 1430; *CCID:* num. 75, 332, 337, 364, 405, 415, 416, 509.

[1474] Blömer 2015: 136.

[1475] Ibid: 135-137. The damaged basalt stele was found in the sanctuary of Jupiter Dolichenus in the locality of Dülük Baba Tepesi in 2007, which was, as the found material implies, occupied in continuity from the early Iron Age to Late Antiquity. The stele dates from the Roman period and it is divided into two parts – a longer, upper part and a smaller lower part. In the upper part, a divine couple of Doliche is represented, while in the lower part a sacrificial scene is shown. In it, two priests are sacrificing around the altar, with a branch or bundle of branches in their right hands. As for the main upper scene, both the male and female deity are shown in a way as they were presented in the Iron Age period – the god has a horned cap on his head, a long pigtail and a belted kilt, holding a thunderbolt in one hand and a double headed axe in the other hand. As M. Blömer emphasises, a particularly ancient iconographic element is represented by the horned crown of the god. The goddess is dressed in an ankle-length belted robe, with a cloak and raised hands, in which she holds a mirror and an unknown round object, perhaps a pomegranate, Blömer 2011: 69-104.

[1476] Winter 2011: 8. However, unlike in the Atargatis-Hadad partnership in the temple of Hierapolis, where the goddess was dominant and the god was subordinated, in the partnership of Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena, the god is the central figure, while the goddess is merely occasionally his companion.

adapted to Roman tastes. However, in his hometown of Doliche, the indigenous population continued to worship the god in a traditional way, keeping intact some of the local beliefs and some older iconographic traits from the Iron Age tradition.[1477] A similar situation is presumed for the goddess Juno Dolichena, who was presented wearing a diadem and holding a sceptre, like the goddess Juno, but sometimes holding a mirror as well, which made her more akin to Dea Syria in the eyes of her Oriental worshippers.[1478] Nobody could know more about or was more attached to the ancestral religion and traditional iconography of the homeland deities, ritual practices and beliefs, than the priests of the Syrian deities, who were mostly of Oriental origin and who spread the religion of their gods and goddesses all over the Roman Empire, devoted to their traditional ways.[1479] As I have already mentioned in the chapter about the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Central Balkans, the priests of the god are known from several inscriptions discovered in the localities of Karataš (*Diana*), Arčar (*Ratiaria*), Jasen and the village of Kličevac, near Viminacium.[1480] In all these localities, the existence of Dolichenus' sanctuaries, *dolichena,* can be presumed as well, not only from epigraphic testimonies, but also by archaeological finds, which is not surprising since the migration of the Orientals to the Danube Limes areas of Pannonia Inferior and Moesia Superior happened in several waves.[1481] The presence of Syrian migrants, however, is attested primarily in larger centres like Sirmium,[1482] Singidunum, Viminacium (where closed communities of Syrian immigrants could have existed),[1483] Scupi or in the localities along the Danube Limes.

In the case of the goddess Dea Syria, however, there are no epigraphic monuments dedicated to the deity found in the Danube Limes area of the former Roman province of Moesia Superior – the closest geographical analogies are, as I have presented, two votive monuments from the locality of Dolno Nerezi (*Scupi*), dedicated to the main goddess of Syria.[1484] The first monument is interesting, because its dedicant, who was the city decurion, honoured the goddess by building her a temple. Unfortunately, the remains of the Dea Syria's sanctuary have not yet been archaeologically confirmed in the area of Scupi. However, priests of the goddess are also known from the neighbouring province of Dacia, from the locality of Porolissum, where the *sacerdos* Aurelius Gaianus (also a city decurion) dedicated a votive altar to the goddess in the first decades of the 3rd century.[1485] On a votive plaque discovered in the locality of Napoca and dated to 214, we again encounter the name of the provincial governor Lucius Marius Perpetuus, known from his dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus found in the Danube Limes locality of Karataš (Diana), as the dedicant of a Dea Syria monument, where it is implied that the temple of the goddess was erected by two brothers.[1486] With this dedication, it is clear that the provincial governor Lucius Marius Perpetuus paid considerable attention to the supreme deities of the Syrian pantheon, which is not surprising bearing in mind the fact that he governed in the period of the reign of the Severan emperors, Septimius Severus and Caracalla.[1487]

What makes the monument from Glamija rare and particularly interesting is the fact that it is dedicated by a priest of two Syrian deities – Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria. Only two more votive inscriptions dedicated to the divine couple, Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria, exist as far as I know – one from the locality of Apulum (Alba Iulia) and one from Rome.[1488] Therefore, the inscription from the locality of Glamija would be the third known priestly dedication to the supreme Syrian god and goddess in the whole territory of the Roman Empire. However, the two inscriptions discovered in

[1477] Blömer 2015: 139.
[1478] Turcan 1996: 161.
[1479] As was already mentioned, votive inscriptions confirm that priests of Jupiter Dolichenus could have been at the same time in active military service or veterans or in some other profession, like for example, a civilian priest who was a wine-merchant, Speidel 1978: 47-50.
[1480] Mirković 1977: 443-448; *CCID*: 71, num. 87, 82, num. 104, 85, num. 112; Mirković 2011: 129-130.
[1481] As I. Popović elaborates, the migration of the Orientals happened: after Trajan's Dacian wars, then during the 2nd century (particularly during the period of the Severan dynasty) and finally at the end of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 4th century, Popović 1993: 75-76;
[1482] A certain Stygius named on the stone slab from the bank of the River Sava in Sremska Mitrovica is mentioned on it as the one who was born in Syria, while the monument of a certain Aurelius names him as *civis Syrus,* Popović 2005: 102.
[1483] *IMS* II: 213.
[1484] *IMS* VI 1982: num. 15, 16 and possibly num. 17.
[1485] *AE* 1977, 662.
[1486] *AE* 1960, 226. The votive monument from Napoca was probably dedicated in 214, by L. Marius Perpetuus who was at the time the governor of the province *tres Daciae,* where he went immediately after his governorship in Moesia Superior, Mirković 1977: 443-448.
[1487] As it was mentioned, during the reign of the African born emperor Septimius Severus and his sons, Oriental cults came more into the focus, but not at the expense of the traditional Roman gods. However, being of Syrian origin, from Emessa and as a daughter of the priest of Elagabal, Septimius Severus' wife Julia Domna was inclined towards the traditional gods of her homeland, which can be confirmed by her affinity towards Dea Syria and the goddess of Carthage, Dea Caelestis. A visible orientalisation can be seen in some of the presentations of Julia Domna, like in the Arch of the Argentarii in the Forum Boarium, where she is presented sacrificing similarly to the scene on the monument from Dura Europos, and her right hand is raised palm forwards, like in the statue of a young woman of the royal dynasty of Hatra, Levick 2007: 22, 134-136; Birley 2002: 72-73. Before the Severan dynasty, as Suetonius confirms, Emperor Nero was inclined towards the cult of Dea Syria, but soon developed contempt towards her as he despised other deities as well, Suetonius VI.56.
[1488] The votive inscription found in the locality of Apulum reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(axiom) D(olicheno) et deae |S< y =U> riae Magnae | Caelesti pro salu|te perpetui imperi(i) | Romani et leg(ionis) XIII | Gem(inae) Flavius Bar|hadadi s(acerdos) I(ovis) D(olicheni) ad | leg(ionem) S(upra) s(criptam) v(oto) l(ibens) m(erito),* *AE* 1965, 30a; The votive inscription from Rome read thus: *Iovi Opt <i =U> mo Max(imo | Dolicheno | sacrum | L(ucius) Fabirius L(uci) (ibertus) Philoti|mus v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)| Iunoni Assy|riae Reg(inae) Dolichenae, CIL* VI, 465.

Apulum and Rome present analogies only in the context of the dedications that are made to the deities, because the inscription from Apulum is dedicated to Dea Syria, identified with the goddess Caelestis, while the monument from Rome is dedicated to *Juno Asyria*. The identification of Dea Syria with the goddess Caelestis on the votive monument from Apulum is not surprising, since the two goddesses shared the same position as supreme deities (one of Syria and the other of Carthage), the same iconography and the same paredros - Baal.[1489] In the context of the iconography, as with Dea Syria and Magna Mater, the goddess Caelestis was represented with lions, frequently riding side-saddle on a lion's back and, like the Syrian goddess and Anatolian Mother, she also had similar clergy, a ceremony similar in nature to the Magna Mater's spring celebrations and *ritus* of *taurobolium*.[1490] The cult of Dea Caelestis is confirmed in Rome at the end of the 1st century, with her temple built in 259 on the Capitoline hill and, like Dea Syria, the goddess was identified with the Roman goddess Juno, becoming more popular during the reign of Septimius Severus, due to the already mentioned affinity of the empress Julia Domna towards the goddess' cult.[1491] As for the votive inscription from Apulum, it is dedicated by the priest Flavius Barhadadi,[1492] who was of Syrian origin and paid respect to the deities of his homeland, probably at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century, maybe even in the period of Caracalla's visit to Dacia.[1493] The second analogy to our monument, the bronze tablet from Rome, is somewhat disputed by certain authors regarding its authenticity, but, nevertheless, it represents a very interesting cult monument, because next to the dedication of the *libertus* Lucius Fabirius to Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Assyria Regina, there is a scene of the divine couple standing on their cult animals and holding in their hands different attributes.[1494] What makes this monument unique among Dolichenus' epigraphic monuments so far, are the epithets of the goddess '*Assyria*' and '*Dolichena*' used together,[1495] but, as M. Hörig and E. Schwertheim rightly point out, referring to the goddess as 'Assyria' and not 'Syria' should not be surprising, since the terms 'Assyria' and 'Assyrians' were used by the ancient writers Lucian (who calls Dea Syria 'Hera Assyria') and Herodotus (who uses the term 'Assyrians', a barbaric name for Greek Syrians).[1496] Although the bronze tablet from Rome, if its authenticity is accepted, is not dedicated by a priest of the divine couple but by a *libertus*, his most probable Semitic origin (judging by his name *Philotimus*) and conservative way of addressing his *dii patria,* are clear. The same can be assumed for other known dedications to Jupiter Dolichenus or to the divine couple of Syrian deities, where the name of the dedicant and the way that he addresses Jupiter Dolichenus or him and his paredra, implies the conservative attitude of the dedicant, in the context of his loyalty to the gods of his homeland, his respect to tradition and his keeping the memory of *dii patrii*, intact.

Returning to the monument from Glamija and the question of the presence and role of the Syrian priesthood in the area of the Danube Limes and the Central Balkan Roman provinces, it is necessary to discuss all known priests of Jupiter Dolichenus' or Dea

[1489] The goddess Caelestis or in the Roman period *Dea Caelestis*, is the supreme female deity of the city of Carthage, known as Tanit (Tinnit). Greeks assimilated her with the goddess Aphrodite and she was known as Aphrodite Ourania, during the Roman reign of Venus Caelestis or Virgo Caelestis, Halsberghe 1984: 2203-2208. As the most important African deity, beside god Saturn, the cult of Caelestis was at the end of the 2nd century the most important cult in Carthage, spreading in the area around the city and in Thuburbo Maius, where the goddess was venerated as a protectress of the city, Gaspar 2012: 73.

[1490] Lightfoot 2003: 21; Halsberghe 1972: 91-94;

[1491] The goddess Caelestis, worshipped in Carthage beside the god Baal-Hammon, later Saturn, was venerated as the celestial deity, goddess of fertility and animals, and as the personification and deification of the natural forces and mother of all things on earth and in the heavens. Besides the goddesses Juno and Venus, she was identified with the goddesses Ceres, Luna, Urania, Fortuna and Magna Mater, Halsberghe 1984: 2203-2209; Halsberghe 1972: 94. Dea Caelestis was worshipped under the epithets sancta, sanctissima, aeterna, domina, etc. Her cult spread in the 2nd and the 3rd century to Italy, Roman Britain and Dacia, particularly strengthening in the period of Severi. As for the connection between the empress Julia Domna and Dea Caelestis see Levick 2007: 133-136.

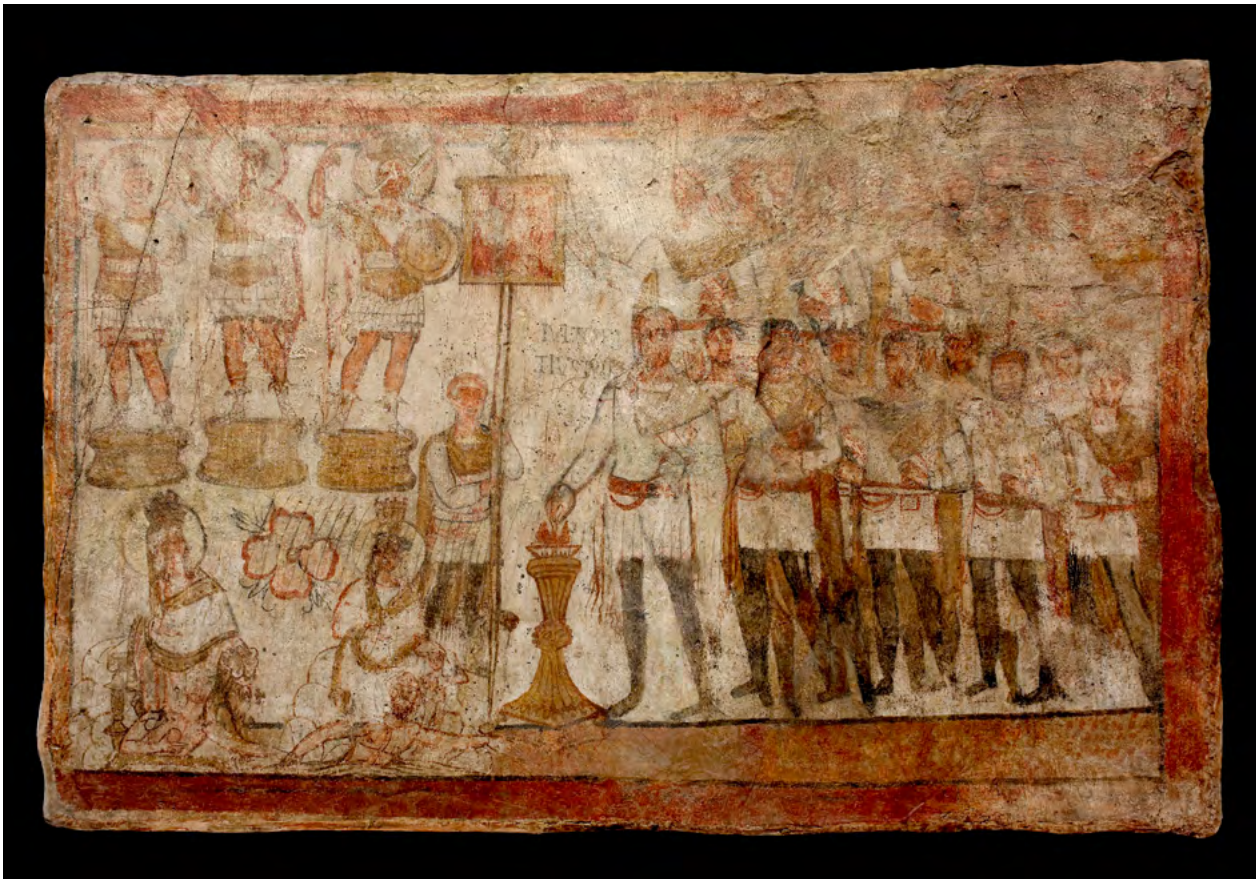
[1492] The name Barhadadi is of Semitic origin and means 'the son of Hadad' (from other inscriptions dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus, similar names such as Barsemon, Barsemes, Barlaha, Barsemias, Barhadados etc., are known), Merlat 1960: 15; Berciu, Popa 1978: 4-7, n. 3.

[1493] Berciu, Popa 1978: 6. A Collar suggests that Apulum was one of the earliest centres of Dolichenus' cult in the Danubian provinces, Collar 2013: 101-102, 111, 125. C. Szabó writes that during the period of Septimius Severus' reign, several groups from Asia Minor and Syria came to Apulum and, at the end of the 2nd century, formed a new layer of settlers in the centre of the gold-mining district. Many Syrians are attested in votive and funerary monuments of Apulum, among them adepts of Dolichenus' cult, who were soldiers from the legio XIII Gemina and who were probably connected to the *dolichenum* (one of two existing in Apulum) built near the *castrum* of the legio XIII Gemina and *Mithraeum* in the southern part of the city with other sanctuaries of oriental deities. The text of Dolichenus' monument from Apulum implies that the group of Dolichenus worshippers, in which Flavius Barhadadi was a priest, consisted of Syrian soldiers and veterans of the Legion XIII Gemina, Szabó 2018: 66-67, 162-163.

[1494] Authors like A. H. Kan disputed the authenticity of the bronze tablet because of the attributes in the deities' hands and the way they are presented with them: Juno Dolichena is holding a sceptre and a discoid object (maybe a mirror) in her hands, while Jupiter Dolichenus is holding a double headed axe in his left hand and a sceptre in his right hand, which is not the usual way of presenting the deities. However, P. Merlat does not exclude the monument from his corpus of Dolichenus monuments, nor do M. Hörig and E. Schwertheim or E. Zappata, who suggests that the gentilicium of the dedicant Fabirius which is unknown, was perhaps wrongly written and that his right name was actually Faberius or Rabirius, Merlat 1951: 244-245, n. 244; *CCID*: num. 430; Zappata 1996: num. 53, 203-204.

[1495] As N. Belayche observes, there was a need by freedman Philotimus to emphasise his devotion and loyalty to the goddess Dea Syria with two epicleses by origin ('Assyria', 'Dolichena') and one theological epiclesis 'Regina' which is mutual to both goddesses, Belayche 2006: 247. Unlike the epithets 'Assyria' and 'Dolichena' in the bronze tablet from Rome, the epithet 'Regina' is frequently used as the epithet of the goddess Juno in the monuments of Jupiter Dolichenus, as is also the case with the epithet 'Sancta', *AE* 1920, 60; *AE* 1939, 274; *AE* 1998, 1430; *CIL* 6, 365; *CIL* 13, 7411; *CIL* 13, 11779; Merlat 1951: 328, num. 338; *CCID:* num. 65.

[1496] Lightfoot 2003: 287-288.



Fresco of Iulius Terentius' sacrifice from Dura Europos
(https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/4961)

Syria's cult, in the aforementioned territory. On several monuments dedicated to the god Jupiter Dolichenus, the dedicants are his priests and majority of the localities where those monuments were found represented the areas of Roman *castra,* that is *castella*. This fact raises a question already mentioned – were the priests of Jupiter Dolichenus maybe at the same time in military service? The priests of Jupiter Dolichenus who were in active or passive military service are already confirmed elsewhere, like in the case of Marcus Ulpius Chresimus, who was a cavalry man and whose name is known from a marble relief dedication discovered in Rome, or Ulpius Amandianus, a soldier associated with a votive monument found in Carnuntum.[1497] Also, since the remains of three *Dolichena* in the Danube Limes area of Moesia Superior[1498] were discovered in close proximity with the Roman *castra*, the presence of Dolichenus' priests there would be expected. The transfer of private priests into a military rank in the 3rd century, or their official acceptance by the army due to the popularity of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult, has already been suggested in the literature and I would agree with such a possibility in the case of Julius Apollinaris from Glamija funerary monument.[1499]

However, no claim about Jupiter Dolichenus' priests certain Syrian origin can be made, as nothing more can be presumed about their appearance, which presumably differed from other Dolichenus' worshippers by the headdress and clothes priests wore (as in the example of two sculptures of Palmyrenian priests from Singidunum)[1500] or they might not have differ (as in the case of the priest Themes, who is presented as a soldier on the fresco in the temple of the Palmyrene gods in Dura-Europos).[1501] There are no written or archaeological testimonies regarding the ritual practices of Syrian priests in the localities along the Danube Limes of Moesia Superior or the territory of the Central Balkan Roman provinces, so it can only be presumed that they were similar to the rituals held in honour of both deities, Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea

[1497] Merlat 1951: num. 239, 108; *CCID*: num. 419, 232; Speidel 1978: num. 25, 26, 47-48.
[1498] The localities Karataš (Diana), Brza Palanka (Egeta) and Čezava.
[1499] Szabó 2018: 67.
[1500] Popović 1993: 71-76; Gavrilović Vitas in press 2021.
[1501] T. Kaizer assumes that the priest *Themis*, who was presented on the fresco of the sacrifice by Julius Terentius from the north wall of the *pronaos* of the temple of the Palmyrene gods in Dura-Europos, was at the same time a *sacerdos* and a member of the imperial army, Kaizer 2006: 151-159; About the appearance of Syrian priests see Stuckey 1976: 127-140; Drijvers 1980: 49.

Syria, in other parts of the Roman Empire.[1502] In that context, but regarding the fact that the monument from Glamija was found in the area of a Roman fortification, we would presume that Julius Apollinaris paid his respect to Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria in their *omnipotens* capacity, as the gods who protect and shield their worshippers from all harm and ensure their victory on the battlefield.[1503] In the fortifications on the Danube border, where the majority of worshippers of the Syrian divine couple were soldiers whose lives were constantly in danger, it is probable that Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria were venerated in the mentioned way. Another argument for the proposed hypothesis would be that, in the case of Dea Syria, unlike other Syrian goddesses whose cults are also known in the area of the Danubian limes (for example, the goddess Balti(s), whose cult is confirmed in several localities in Pannonia Inferior),[1504] she represented a homeland deity to Syrian worshippers and, as an *omnipotens* goddess, she was regarded as a protectress in the most general sense of the word. The priests of Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria also distinguished themselves from other people by their attire – judging by so-far known iconographic presentations of North Syrian priests dating to the Roman period, it seems that the appearance of their priestly dress did not change from the Late Iron Age – the priesthood of both gods wore a long belted dress and a tall conical cap which was probably richly ornamented (similar to the Palmyrene clergy in the context of a wreath with a central gemstone, below the conical cap). Their priestly attire was easily recognisable, primarily because of the tall conical cap and the attributes priests held while sacrificing to their gods (a sprig of leaves, incense, *acerra* and ritual vessels).[1505] A similar look of the priests can be presumed for epigraphically attested clergy in the Central Balkans territory as well.

At the end of this concise review about the funerary monument from Glamija, one dilemma should be mentioned regarding the context of the place where the monument was found, the locality of Glamija. The locality, the full name of which is Rtkovo-Glamija I, is situated near the village of Rtkovo, on a natural hill, which made an excellent location for the building of the oldest fortification, which was primarily a watchtower.[1506] The Antique remains of the Glamija fortifications were first mentioned by Marsigli and later by F. Kanitz and other researchers. The first archaeological excavations in the locality were carried out between 1980 and 1982 and confirmed the older, smaller fortification of a square foundation (burgum), surrounded by a later, larger, outer fortification (castellum), built for stationing auxiliary troops in the 6th century. The analysis of the archaeological material (fibulae, lamps, glass ware, etc.) and coinage from the older fortification confirmed two building phases – the first building phase was determined by the coins of Valentinian I, Theodosius I, Honorius and Arcadius

[1502] Similarities in ritual practices in the cults of Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria allow us to presume that the priest who led ritual processions was also at the top of the hierarchy of the religious community of the *cultores* of the gods (the so-called brothers, *fraters*), who were joined together in ritual practices and liturgical banquets, celebrated in honour of the gods. Beside the main sacrifice, which constituted of sacral animals offered to the deities, the ritual of sacrifice included fire sacrifices (pouring incense and wine on a fire lit on the altar). After the animal sacrifice, a liturgical banquet took place, in which the right shank of the animal (in the case of Dea Syria fish, dove and pork were forbidden for consuming, but the meat of bull, goat and lamb was acceptable, as in the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus) was set aside for the god, some part of the carcass was reserved for the priest, while the *extra* (the best parts of the animal, like the liver, heart, etc.) was boiled or grilled and eaten by the god's worshippers, thus symbolising their absorption of the divine essence, Pöllath, Peters 2011: 50-57; Ekroth 2016: 329. As for the atmosphere in which ritual practices were conducted, we cannot lean on Lucian's description of the quite barbaric and luxurious rituals of Dea Syria's cult in Hierapolis. Rituals held in the goddess' honour in other parts of the Roman Empire were probably without much pomp and noise and consisted of the purification ritual and the mentioned sacrifices by the priests, perhaps (as in the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus) the idol of the goddess was carried in a litter around her sanctuary, Morin 1960: 118-121; Turcan 1996: 164. The previously written is, of course, only a hypothetical reconstruction of the rituals that were held in honour of the Syrian deities in the Danube Limes area of Moesia Superior, because we agree with P. Merlat's observations that the cult practice depended on the particular local characteristics in certain Roman provinces and that the rites and cult practices differed from province to province. Also, differences possibly existed between cult rituals conducted in sanctuaries in military centres and those held in sanctuaries in civil centres, Merlat 1960: 205.

[1503] The attribution of responsibility for 'heaven and earth' to Hadad and Atargatis by Macrobius is well known, Macrobius I, XXIII, 20. However, here we are referring to Dea Syria's dimension of the protectress of the soldiers' lives, not only during their service and on the battlefield, but also in their journey to death. As I. Skupinska-Lovset argues, it is very possible that the believers of the goddess would turn 'to her for protection while passing the barrier of death', Skupinska-Lovset 2005: 382.

[1504] The goddess Balti(s), whose name is translated as 'my lady', is mentioned on several dedications from Danubian Limes' localities, on monuments from Aquincum, even together with the goddess Dea Syria, *AE* 1982, 803; *CIL* 3, 10393. On the monument from Alba Julia, the goddess Balti(s) is mentioned together with Caelestis which, bearing in mind the close connection between Dea Syria and Dea Caelestis, again confirms a link between not only those two deities but a certain closeness between all three goddesses. Balti(s) was the goddess who was worshipped as the goddess of love and fertility in North Mesopotamia, under different names such as al-Uzza, Aphrodite, the Star etc., Drijvers 1980: 184-185.

[1505] Different scholars explored iconography of priests in Syria, notably R. A. Stucky and R. Krumeich, but in a recent article of M. Blömer new finds from various sites in northern Syria had been discussed, primarily the life-sized portrait of a priest dated to the late 2nd or early 3rd century, which shows a male with a high conical headdress, surmounted by a crescent and richly ornamented surface of the hat. Below the hat, a wreath with a large central gem is presented. The author identifies the portrait as a priest of Atargatis – Dea Syria. The priests of Jupiter Dolichenus had similar if not the same priestly attire – a long garment with short or long sleeves, large belt and tall pilos, like god's clergy is presented in a votive altar from *dolichenum* in Dülük Baba Tepesi, large basalt stele from the village of Hamman, basalt relief from locality Kilis (between Doliche and Cyrrhus), a funerary stele from Kantara, Gaziantep, etc. In some cases, a priest can be dressed in Greek costume, wearing chiton and himation, but again wearing a high conical hat, like in a funerary relief of the priest Rapsones from his tomb near Babulin in Syria, Blömer 2015: 186-192.

[1506] Gabričević 1986: 71-74; Špehar 2010: 22-23.

and belongs to the 4th century, while the second, later building phase was determined by the coins of Anastasius I and Justin I and dates at the beginning of the 6th century. The first phase of the older fortification ended with its destruction, which happened at the beginning of the 5th century and the fortification was then partly restored during the reign of Anastasius I. As for the later, larger fortification, it represented a characteristically early Byzantine fortification, dated to the 6th century. It was partly excavated (north-western, south-western and north-eastern towers, and parts of the walls on the northern, western and southern side of the fortification) and it was probably never finished (this assumption is made because of the absence of building rubble and archaeological material).[1507]

Archaeological material has confirmed, besides a military presence, the presence of civilians and women in the smaller fortress of the first phase, to which the funerary monument would chronologically belong.[1508] It is well known from other Roman provinces that women were also among the worshippers of both Syrian cults. However, what puzzles us, besides the fact that no traces of a sanctuary have been detected by the archaeological excavations in Glamija, is that the monument dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria was used as *spolia* in the wall of the older fortification at the site and that the locality itself is not such a prominent Limes locality where a larger group of worshippers or some closed group of devotees of Syrian gods would be expected. There is also the question of the dating of the monument from Glamija: the older phase of the fortification, which was primarily used as a watchtower, is dated to the 4th century, which is, in our opinion, a late period for the date of erecting a monument to Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria in the Danube Limes part of Moesia Superior, bearing in mind the fact that the latest Dolichenus monument from this area, a *tabula ansata* dedicated to the god from the locality of Brza Palanka (Egeta), is dated to the middle of the 3rd century.[1509] In that context, my opinion leans towards the possibility that the monument was actually erected in some other locality where Syrians were present, where the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus or the cult of Dea Syria or both cults were attested and from where, in some moment, the monument was transferred and used as building material for the fortification at Glamija.[1510] Further developing such a hypothesis, the locality which could be the primary place of the erection of the monument of Julius Apollinaris, would be the locality of Drobeta, the site where the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus is well confirmed epigraphically and archaeologically and from where transportation by river would be easy.[1511] The possibility of Drobeta being the original site from where the monument dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria was transferred to Glamija could be strengthened by the fact that a similar dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus, erected by three *sacerdotes militares,* probably during the reign of Septimius Severus and/or Caracalla, was found in Drobeta.[1512] Also, the period of the reign of the Severan dynasty seems more fitting for the dedication of the Glamija monument by a priest of the Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria cults, to which the emperor Septimius and his spouse Julia Domna were inclined, than the period of the 4th century, to which the older fortification in Glamija is dated. The second locality that could also be a place from where the monument might have been transported is the locality of Karataš (Diana), which has already been mentioned as a cult site of Jupiter Dolichenus, and where a sanctuary with *sacerdotes eiusdem loci* existed.[1513] However, with the current level of research, the previously mentioned opinion remains purely in the domain of a hypothesis.

The monument of Julius Apollinaris represents an important testimony by a priest and, therefore, a person who was or should have been very well acquainted with the theology and rituals of the cults of both deities, Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria. The priest would not casually use the name 'Dea Syria' for the goddess in the context of thinking of her as only the consort of the god Jupiter Dolichenus – in that case he would, of course,

[1507] Ibid.

[1508] Beside lamps, *fibulae*, different kinds of weapons and military equipment, archaeological material from the older phase of Glamija's fortification included: fragmented earrings, bracelets, pins and whorls, which confirm the presence of women inside the fortification in the late antique period, Gabričević 1986: 72. The involvement of women in the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus is usually connected to their position in the family, they appear within the family structure, as A. Collar remarks, and are rarely dedicants to the god, judging by so-far known dedications from Mauer-an-der-Url, Trieste, Belgia and Britannia, Collar 2011: 242. As for the cult of the goddess Atargatis/Dea Syria, women were active participants in the rituals and banquets honouring the goddess, but again within their communities and families, never leading the cult processions or sacrificing to the goddess, Finlayson 2013: 61-86.

[1509] Ibid. I should also emphasise the importance of the formula *DM* on the funerary stela from Glamija, as a possible chronology marker, because it is the abbreviation of the formula *Dis Manibus*, which began to regularly appear in Roman epitaphs from the 2nd century, Noy 2009: 423.

[1510] In this context, I will mention an interesting analogy in the funerary monument from Salona of Aurelius Germanus Barlaha, who was sacerdos of Jupiter Dolichenus and who erected the monument for himself and his Syrian wife, *CIL* 3, 8785. It confirms not only the existence of Syrian migrants in Salona and the worship of Syrian deities in the city, but also perhaps a religious mission of Dolichenus priests in Salona with the goal to spread the cult of the god and thus gaining more and more worshipers of his cult.

[1511] A votive monument dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus by three sacerdotes of the cohors I Sagittariorum, was found in the area of the Roman *castrum* in Drobeta and may be connected to the existence of a god's sanctuary. All three priests belonged to the cohors I Sagittaria, which was stationed at Drobeta in the first part of the 3rd century, *AE* 2006, 1125; C. Petolescu discusses the possibility of the existence of a *dolichenum* at Drobeta, Petolescu 2004: 44; Ţentea 2012: 62.

[1512] Beside the votive monument dedicated by three priests to Jupiter Dolichenus, a marble head (30 cm) of Jupiter Dolichenus was found inside the Roman *castrum* at Drobeta, belonging to a full-size sculpture of the deity and representing a rare find in Dacia in connection with the god's cult, for more details see Popa, Berciu 1978: 22-23, n. 20.

[1513] Mirković 2015: 92-93, n. 39.

name her Juno Dolichena. Therefore, I think that Julius Apollinaris, who was most probably of Syrian origin, possessed enough education and knowledge to be aware of the religious continuity between the ancestral deities of Doliche, Hadad and Atargatis, who, in the period of Roman domination, become syncretised with the supreme Roman god and goddess Jupiter and Juno and whose iconographies were adapted, to a degree, to Roman tastes, but still held the same values and meaning (along with particular Oriental iconographic details) that they had in their homeland for their Syrian worshippers.

When analysing the possibility of the existence of a religious community of Syrian deities in a small locality such as Glamija, where the monument dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria was found used as *spolia* and where no other Oriental cult was confirmed, and the possibility of the monument being transported at some time from some other locality where a religious community of Syrian deities existed in continuity, such as, for example, Drobeta, I am, at this time, more inclined towards the latter suggestion. As a priest, Julius Apollinaris was certainly motivated and eager to spread the cults of the deities of his homeland in a foreign environment. By partnering Jupiter Dolichenus, a very popular military deity, with the Syrian supreme female divinity, Dea Syria, who was Romanised enough to be acceptable to non-Orientals as well, he left undoubted testimony to the existence and cult practice of the two main Syrian deities in the area of the Danube Limes in Central Balkans Roman provinces.

As can be observed from this analysis of the testimonies of Dea Syria's cult in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans, the goddess' cult was introduced in the territory probably in the first century, not earlier. Unfortunately, we have no data to presume whether her relatively small number of devotees were soldiers as in Dacia, or merchants, craftsmen, slaves, freedmen, etc.[1514] Since we possess no iconographic representation of the goddess on the territory of the Central Balkans, we can only presume that Dea Syria had a certain number of loyal devotees, of whom some, perhaps, had important functions in the community in Skoplje (and perhaps other centres in the Central Balkans. The goddess had her clergy, most probably of Oriental origin, who were present in the territory, spread her cult and took care of the organisation and performing of ritual practices. Since the erection of her temple is mentioned on only one votive monument dedicated to the goddess and built by the dedicant at his own expense, we can assume that it was a modest, local type of sanctuary, with a *sacrarium* and, perhaps, a small *triclinium* for ceremonial banquets in Dea Syria's honour. Similar rooms of this function have been attested in the goddess' temples elsewhere.[1515] However, since only one votive monument dedicated to the Syrian goddess is attested with certainty and no syncretism with other goddesses is attested, everything points to the presumption that the worshippers of the Syrian goddess in the Central Balkans were not numerous. Also, the only datable monument is from the end of the 1st century. Can we then assume that the goddess' cult did not exist in the Central Balkans territory in a later period? In earlier literature, some authors thought that epigraphic monuments with the motif of fish could indicate a symbolic substitution of Dea Syria.[1516] Here, I allude to archaeological monuments of the so-called Danubian Riders' cult, a syncretistic cult which was well favoured in the Danubian provinces from the 2nd to the 4th century. In that context, since the Danubian Riders' cult is confirmed in different localities in the Central Balkans, I would like to present a concise review of the hypothesis that connected the cult with the cult of Dea Syria. T. Antonescu, in the figure of the goddess flanked by two riders on Danubian Riders' monuments, recognised the syncretistic deity goddess Artemis-Anahita-Cybele-Rhea-Venus-Artemis of Ephesus. F. J. Dölger believed that the central female figure between the two riders is the goddess Atargatis, whose attribute of a fish is almost always present on Danubian Riders' monuments. The author assumes that the earliest presentations from cult votive plates were copied from Hadrian's coins from Ephesus, where, on the obverse, the goddess Artemis-Anahita is shown between Dioscuri and on the reverse a goddess is shown with two riders saluting the deity with their raised hands. In F. J. Dölger's opinion, the cult of the Danubian Riders originated in Asia Minor, spread into Thrace and there assimilated with the cult of the goddess Artemis-Bendis, later respected as the Mother goddess. M. Rostovtzeff and A. Buday thought that the goddess from the Danubian Riders plates is the Mother goddess, while A. LeRoy Campbell believed that the motif of fish on the plates is an attribute of the goddess Aphrodite-Astarte-Anahite, who was syncretised with Dea Syria. E. L. Ochsenschlager was also convinced that the goddess standing in the middle of two riders on the Danubian Riders plates is Dea Syria, while D. Tudor thinks that the motif of fish represents an indigenous element, which was widely accepted by Asia Minor and Syrian migrants who lived in the Danubian provinces.

[1514] I. Berciu and C. C. Petolescu state that the confirmations of Dea Syria's cult in Dacia are constated on the localities Apulum, Micia, Napoca, Porolissum and Romula. The votive monument from Romula is particularly interesting because the dedication is made to the goddess under her Syrian name *Atargatis*, which can be explained by the fact that military units formed from the soldiers recruited in Syria (numerus Surorum sagittariorum and cohors I Flavia Commagenorum) were stationed in Romula, Berciu, Petolescu 1976: 8.

[1515] Nielsen 2015: 56.

[1516] Tudor 1976: 105-109, 210-211.

No epigraphic monument so-far support these hypotheses, therefore I suggest that, without arguments that would certainly attest that the motif of fish is a substitute symbol for the goddess Dea Syria, the monuments on which solely the motif of fish is presented, cannot be considered as indirect affirmations of the Syrian goddess's cult.

Since I mentioned the cult of Danubian Riders, I would like to make a short digression in the context of two votive monuments dedicated to Dom(i)na and Dom(i)nus from Central Balkans' localities, Drmno (Viminacium)[1517] and Niš.[1518] The new interpretation of the monuments of Danubian Riders, which are in new publication of A. Szabó associated with the cult of deities Domna (Domina) and Domnus is certainly worth considering,[1519] but what is important for our subject is the fact that the author defines Domna (Domina) and Domnus as universal gods, and not oriental deities which has been suggested by certain authors in the scholarly literature. In that context, I would like to refer to the cults of Dom(i)na and Dom(i)nus on Central Balkans' territory as well, because based on the fact that *domina* is sometimes the epithet of goddess Cybele, it has been suggested by P. Petrović that the divine pair from Niš monument should be associated with Asia Minor deities Cybele and Attis.[1520] However, since nor the monument from Niš, nor the monument found in Drmno contain enough elements for the presumption that behind the names of Dom(i)na and Dom(i)nus, the Asia Minor deities are hidden, the monuments aren't included in the corpus of the monuments in this study.[1521]

[1517] The votive monument from Drmno (Viminacium) is dedicated to Domnus and Domina, by certain Crescentilla and is dated to the period between the 2nd and the 3rd century. The monument is lost, *IMS* II, 63-64, num. 6.

[1518] The votive monument from Niš, unfortunately lost too, is dedicated to Domna Regina, Domnus and Bonus Eventus by Ulpius Martinus, strator consularis of Legion VII Claudia and is dated between 222-235, *IMS* IV, 68-69, num. 3.

[1519] Szabó 2017.

[1520] *IMS* IV, 68.

[1521] Here one more votive monument should be mentioned, discovered in the locality Brazda (northern from Scupi), dedicated to Jupiter, Caelus and Terra Pontoque, *IlJug* num. 555; *IMS* VI, 52, num. 7. The monument reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Caelo et Terrae Ponto/que beato ob vindictam / fecit / Cass(ii) Vict(oris ?) / Scup(orum) aed(ilis) dec(urionis) / Victor Onesimus / aram. V(otum) s(olvit) m(erito).* B. Dragojević-Josifovska presumes that the cognomen Onesimus could imply the Oriental origin of the dedicant and thus that the divine triad could present Syrian gods, *IMS* VI, 37, 52. However, the cognomen Onesimus is very frequently attested in Roman provinces and doesn't always present a certain implication of dedicant's Oriental origin. Since there are no solid arguments for the presumption that the monument from the locality Brazda is dedicated to Syrian deities, it hasn't been included in the corpus of the monuments in this study.

3. Theos Hypsistos

3.1. The Cult of Theos Hypsistos in Graeco-Roman culture

Few cults have raised so many debates in scholarly literature as the cult of Theos Hypsistos, and even today, scholars cannot agree about the final answer to the questions regarding the origin, characteristics and aspects of the deity. The cult of Theos Hypsistos spread across the eastern Mediterranean basin, around the Black Sea, and in Egypt and the Near East, in the period from the 2nd century BC in Macedonia to the 5th century in Phoenicia. The first scholar who analysed the cult of Theos Hypsistos and the organisation of his devotees was E. Schürer, who concluded that the god was a Semitic, that is a Jewish deity, to a certain degree syncretised with pagan gods. In the author's opinion, the cult of Theos Hypsistos was a syncretistic religion, combining features of paganism and Judaism.[1522] Most historians of religions, like F. Cumont, A. B. Cook and E. Simon, supported such an opinion, with A. D. Nock (together with colleagues C. Roberts and T. C. Skeat) remarking that the god was probably originally from Edessa in Macedonia and that Judaism had a strong influence on its cult, but that his epithet was spread beyond Jewish influence.[1523] V. Parvan and R. Marić presumed that Theos Hypsistos was probably a Dacian or Thracian god, led by the hypothesis of M. Rostovtzeff that the god was closely connected to the god Sabazius.[1524] D. Detchev also believed in a Thracian character of the god, who was, together with the Nymphs, respected in a sanctuary in Madara.[1525] L. Robert negates the Jewish influence in Theos Hypsistos' cult, as does M. Tatcheva-Hitova, who underlines the very strong Thracian impact on the god's cult.[1526] T. Drew-Bear and C. Naour emphasise that it is very possible that inside Jewish communities Theos Hypsistos was designated a deity of Jewish nature, but that in other cultures, like Phrygian or Thracian, there are no traces of any Jewish influence.[1527] P. R. Trebilco also thinks that inscriptions dedicated to Theos or Theos Hypsistos should not be considered the dedications of Jewish dedicants to a Jewish deity, unless there are onomastic-epigraphic indications that they are dedications of Jewish individuals made to a god of the same origin.[1528] I. Levinskaya differentiates the cults of Zeus Hypsistos and Theos Hypsistos, observing that dedications to both gods were not found together (except in Athens) and agrees with E. Schürer that the dedications made to Theos Hypsistos display a Jewish influence.[1529] J. Ustinova considers that Theos Hypsistos was a deity of complex character, in which Nature traits of Iranian, Jewish and pagan religions can be recognised.[1530] S. Mitchell agrees with the hypothesis about the Jewish influence in the spread of Theos Hypsistos' cult, but also points to the local origin of the deity in Greece and Macedonia (to whom Jewish terminology was added). The scholar does not give a final opinion about the god's origin, but concludes that his cult was quite a complex cult, venerated by Jews and pagans as well.[1531] However, in his recent work, the author argues that Theos or Zeus Hypsistos was an abstract god, identified with Aether, whose messengers were pagan gods. Discussing newly discovered epigraphic and archaeological material connected to the cult of Hypsistos, S. Mitchell constates that the worshippers of Theos Hypsistos were already widespread and well connected in the 1st and the 2nd centuries, during which time they established close relationships with Jewish communities and that, although the cult was not monotheistic in the exclusive sense of the word, the fact that many of the god's believers worshipped him alone proves to the author that it was a form of monotheistic religion.[1532] A. Jovanović presumes that the Balkan elements and Asia Minor influences are syncretised in the cult of Theos Hypsistos.[1533] N. Belayche believes that Theos Hypsistos was not the name of the god, but that under the term 'Hypsistos', the dedicant of a particular god or goddess expressed their exaltation toward the deity in question. She thinks that through the impersonal Theos used in

[1522] Discussing the devotees of Theos Hypsistos (*σεβόμενοι θεον ύφιστον*), E. Schürer concluded that they were pagans who performed certain ritual practices of Jewish origin and who were the carriers of monotheism. Also, the scholar doesn't negate the fact that the term *hypsistos* was used for pagan deities, like Zeus, Attis and Mithras and suggests that Theos Hypsistos was probably a syncretistic divinity of Jewish and pagan god, Ustinova 1999: 179.

[1523] Analyzing epigraphic and archaeological monuments of god Theos, that is Theos Hypsistos, A. D. Nock, C. Roberts and T. C. Skeat stated that the earliest dedications appear at Edessa, dated to the first half of the 2nd century. On one of them, a figure of an eagle is presented, Roberts, Skeat, Nock 1936: 60.

[1524] Marić 1933: 21; Ustinova 1999: 180.

[1525] Јовановић 1996: 129.

[1526] Bošković-Robert 2006: 252; Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 205-206.

[1527] Drew-Bear, Naour 1990: 2033-2036.

[1528] Trebilco 1991: 132-133.

[1529] Levinskaya 1996: 95-97.

[1530] Ustinova 1999: 286-287.

[1531] Mitchell 2002: 127-128.

[1532] S. Mitchell states that the corpus of Theos Hypsistos' cult encompasses around 375 inscriptions, majority dedicated to Theos Hypsistos, followed by the inscriptions dedicated to the god Zeus and smaller number of inscriptions dedicated only to Hypsistos, Mitchell 2010: 167; Ibid: 197-198.

[1533] Јовановић 1996: 134.

the invocation of a particular god, rather than through invoking him or her by their personal name, dedicants emphasised the greatness of the deity's nature.[1534] A. Collar discusses the cult in the frame of her network theory and offers the hypothesis of a cult linked strongly to Jewish monotheism.[1535]

The epithet Hypsistos, that is *Ύψιστος,* meaning 'the highest', is the epithet which was attributed by Pindar in the 5th century BC to Zeus in the author's Nemean Ode,[1536] but also the term which designated the god of the Jews, and master of animals and people, in the Canonic books of The Old Testament and later books from the Hellenistic period.[1537] In the earlier works, scholars thought that the epithet Hipsistos was attributed both by Jews and pagans to the god Yahveh.[1538] However, not a small number of votive monuments exists where, under the name of Theos, that is Theos Hypsistos, different gods and goddesses are hidden.[1539] The earliest inscriptions dedicated to Theos Hypsistos originate from Edesa and represent vows of the dedicant Zoilus, from the first half of the 2nd century BC.[1540] Votive monuments dedicated to the god dating from the 2nd and the 1st century BC are numerous in the territories of Asia Minor and Greece, which is attested on inscriptions from Oenoanda in south-western Turkey, Delos, Olympia, Corinth, Sparta, Athens, Kos, Cyprus, Paros, etc.[1541] The inscription from Oenoanda, a pagan oracle, deserves particular attention, since it was composed by a well educated priest of an 'un-named god who encompasses all other gods and dwells in fire', where his dwelling in fire is additionally implied by the relief of another altar found nearby and dedicated to Theos Hypsistos by Chromatis, with an offering of a lantern.[1542] Equally interesting inscriptions dedicated to Theos Hypsistos are known from lamps, which represented votive offerings to the deity. In the god's temple in Serdica, a votive monument was found dedicated to Theos Hypsistos, with images of four lamps, while in Delos, over 60 lamps were also discovered in the temple of the god.[1543] On the lamp from Alexandria, Theos Hypsistos is equated with god Helios, while on a votive monument from Pergamon the vow is made to Helios Theos Hypsistos.[1544] It is presumed that lamps and torches had an important role in the ritual practices in the deity's cult, and the fact that numerous ex-votos were offered to the deity is attested by the discovery of no less than 56 niches designated for placing votive offerings to Theos Hypsistos in his temple in Athens.[1545] Besides twelve dedications to the god, 20 anatomical votives offered by persons that the god had cured were also discovered, implying that Theos Hypsistos was venerated in Athens as an iatric deity too.[1546] M. Tatcheva-Hitova assumes that the town of Edessa in Macedonia was a main centre of the cult's diffusion, while another important centre was the town of Kozani. It is interesting that on the monuments dedicated to Zeus Hypsistos from Edessa, but also Beroea, a figure of an eagle is frequently presented. An image of the bird is also shown on a votive plate from Kavala in northern Greece, dated to the 3rd century, and on five stelae of the Tanais collegia (Bosphorus) the motif of an eagle is shown holding wreaths and garlands.[1547]

[1534] Belayche 2011: 163-164.

[1535] After discussing the cult of Theos Hypsistos as an example for her network theory, A. Collar concludes that the cult was diffused evenly from the 1st century and its presence was attested in the same localities where Jewish communities were known. In her opinion, the cult underwent a major change in the 2nd and the 3rd century in the context of a rapid increase of epigraphic testimonies, which the author explains with the re-activation of a previously established religious network, Collar 2013: 284-285.

[1536] As E. Schürer shows, the epithet Ύψιστος was in use in pagan literature earliest in the 5th century BC, not only by Pindar, but by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Theocritus, who all attributed the epithet to describe god Zeus, Schürer 1897: 209. Pausanias mentions monuments of Zeus Hypsistos in Corinth (a statue), Olympia (two altars) and Thebes (a sanctuary), Pausanias, *Description of Greece,* 2.2.8, 5.15.5, 9.8.5.

[1537] Roberts, Skeat, Nock 1936: 63. In Greek Old Testament, Septuagint, the term Theos Hypsistos appears more than 100 times, it is a translation of the Hebrew El Elyon and it is presumed that it was an official term with which Romans named the god of the Jews, Yahve, Levinskaya 1996: 95.

[1538] Describing a relief representation of Cybele and Theos Hypsistos, F. Cumont offered the opinion that Hypsistos was a synonym for the god of Israel, Cumont 1942: 59. For M. P. Nilsson, Zeus Hypsistos was actually a Greek god Zeus equated with Jewish deity Hypsistos, under the strong influence of the Jews inhabited in Asia Minor. P. R. Trebilco believes that particularly in Phrygia and Lydia, an inclination towards the abstract deities like Theos Hypsistos was, existed, so that the term Hypsistos was used to designate Jewish god Yahve, but also pagan gods from dedicants of different origin, Trebilco 1991: 132.

[1539] In Lydia, Thea Hypsista was the name of one of the local Mother goddesses. In Egypt, the epithet Hypsistos was attributed to goddess Isis, Ibid: 128-129. In Phrygia the god Theos Hypsistos was equated with a local Zeus Beneus, while in Caria the deity was equated with the god of unknown name, Robert, Skeat, Nock 1936: 63.

[1540] Two almost identical votive monuments are dedicated by Zoilus, son of Alexander from Edessa to Theos Hypsistos, Ibid: 66-67.

[1541] A detailed list of the inscriptions and the localities in Phrygia dedicated to Theos Hypsistos can be found in Trebilco 1991: 133 etc.; Mitchell 2001: 128 etc.

[1542] Bean 1971: 20-22. S. Mitchell concludes that the divine personality of un-named god from Oinoanda is not equated with any of the Olympian gods, not even Zeus, because he elevates beyond them all and is beyond reach in Aethar, the upper air of heaven and connects the inscription from Oinoanda to the cult of Theos Hypsistos, Mitchell 2001: 81-92.

[1543] The sanctuary of Theos Hypsistos in Serdica was a humble temple in which six votive monuments, two reliefs with the image of god with an eagle and three presentations of an eagle were found, Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 192-193. The sanctuary of Theos Hypsistos on Delos was in use from the 1st century BC to the 2nd century and it was a building which Jewish residents of the island used also as a synagogue, Mitchell 2001: 98.

[1544] The inscription from a lamp found in Alexandria is dedicated to the deities Theos Hypsistos, Helios and Nemesis. The lamps with the inscriptions dedicated to the 'Highest god' are constated in the villages of north Lydia, Phrygian Tiberiopolis, etc., Ibid: 91.

[1545] Theos Hypsistos' temple in Athens existed and was used from the middle of the 1st century to the middle of the 3rd century, Ibid: 97-98. Of 34 inscriptions, 19 are dedicated by women who were also in the majority as dedicants of anatomical votives.

[1546] It is presumed that on Cyprus, Paros and Thera, Theos Hypsistos was also venerated as an iatric deity, Bošković-Robert 2006: 253.

[1547] Five votive monuments with the image of an eagle with wreaths and garlands are known from the locality Tanais, for which E. Shürer believed were designating the pagan origin of the dedicants. However, J. Ustinova emphasises that the images of eagles with wreaths and

An equal number of votive monuments dedicated to Theos Hypsistos and Zeus Hypsistos is constated in Thrace, where on some monuments (analogous to the monuments from Macedonia and Greece), an image of an eagle is present. In Moesia Inferior three monuments dedicated to Theos Hypsistos are known, discovered in the localities of Odessos, Tomis and Pleven, and on the monument from Odessos the god is presented in the act of libation together with a devotee who is approaching the god, leading a bull as a sacrificial animal.[1548]

Theos, that is Zeus Hypsistos, was primarily respected as a celestial deity, a god who occupied a heavenly domain, which is clearly indicated by the epithet under which the god was worshipped similar to the Anatolian and Near Eastern gods, some of whom were the mountain deities.[1549] In Mysia, the god was the master of thunder (Βροντaίος)[1550] and the highest god of lightning (κεραύνιος).[1551]In Phrygia, the deity was venerated as the protector of agriculture and the annual harvest, the guardian of justice, but also as an iatric god.[1552] On funerary monuments from Acmonia and Tessaly, the vows are made to the god to protect the graves of the deceased, therefore, he was respected as a chthonian deity.[1553] The texts of Asia Minor inscriptions imply that Theos Hypsistos communicated with his devotees not through direct epiphany, but through dreams and prophecies or through angels who were his messengers.[1554] The god was worshipped as *επήκοος,* the one who listens to the prayers of his adherents, which is the epithet of the god on bilingual dedications from Palmyra, Dacia and Thrace.[1555] As an iatric god, Theos Hypsistos was respected in different Roman provinces, including Dacia, Greece and Thrace and M. Tatcheva-Hitova emphasises that votive monuments from Thrace prove that the god was also regarded as the one who helped his dedicants in their troubles and gave them support and security.[1556] In the Bosporus, the cult of Theos Hypsistos was the second most important cult, after the cult of Aphrodite Ourania and it is attested in different Bosporus localities from the early 1st to the 4th century, with a centre in Tanais.[1557] Although different scholars have suggested that the cult of Theos Hypsistos in the Bosporus showed the same syncretism of Jewish and pagan traits, J. Ustinova argued that the cult of the god whose name is attested in different forms,[1558] originated from indigenous celestial gods, who were accepted and adopted as patrons of Bosporus kings.[1559]

Iconographic representations known from monuments of Theos or Zeus Hypsistos attest different types of the deity's imagery, but certain authors, like I. Levinskaya, state that the god was an abstract deity without any iconography. However, a representation from the locality of Byblos, with an inscription dedicated to Theos Hypsistos, as a votive monument dedicated to the god from Serdica, show a mature, bearded man with a cloak.[1560] The god's iconography varied – thus, we can differ several groups of Theos Hypsistos' monuments: in the first group of monuments, an eagle with outstretched wings is represented, which is the iconography characteristic for Zeus but also for Asia Minor and Syrian gods. The second group of monuments would encompass monuments with an image of an eagle clutching a bull's head, similar to the iconography of monuments dedicated to the gods Jupiter Dolichenus and Jupiter Turmasgades.[1561] Two gods, Jupiter Dolichenus and Theos Hypsistos, shared the same epithet on votive monuments – *exsuperantissimus*.[1562] The third type of iconographic presentations shows Theos Hypsistos as the god Zeus, who is performing the act of libation over the altar in the company of an eagle. The fourth group comprises monuments on which an eagle takes Zeus Hypsistos to Heaven, while on another group of monuments the bust of the god is presented, with attributes of a thunderbolt and a long sceptre.[1563] There is also a fifth

garlands are also known from Jewish monuments, Ustinova 1999: 183-184.

[1548] Јовановић 1996: 130.

[1549] Roberts, Skeat, Nock 1936: 67-68; Belayche 2011: 153.

[1550] As the master of thunder, Theos Hypsistos was venerated in Mysia, Sparta, Palmyra, etc., Belayche 2011: 152.

[1551] Ibid: 152-153.

[1552] On several votive monuments from Phrygia dedicated to Theos Hypsistos, a motif of wheat or corn is present, Mitchell 2001: 106. On a votive monument from Tavsanli a dedication is made to the god as the protector of agriculture and harvest, while the monument from Aezani bears a plea to the god of certain Aurelius Asclepiades to recover from his illness, Drew-Bear, Naour 1990: 2036-2040, num. 31, 33.

[1553] Ustinova 1999: 222. On a votive monument from Thessaly, a vow is made to Theos Hypsistos and the Queen of the Underworld, to protect the deceased, Nilsson 1963: 112.

[1554] Mitchell 2001: 126.

[1555] Johnson 1984: 1607. On the votive monument of dedicant Aelius Apollinarius and his spouse, Maxima from the locality Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Theos Hypsistos is mentioned under the epithet *επήκοος*, Sanie 1978: 1108. The god is known by the same epithet on the monuments from Serdica and Asenovgrad, Tatcheva-Hitova 1977: 293.

[1556] The dedicants of the majority of Theos Hypsistos' votive monuments from Athens are women who suffered from some illness or infertility. The god was venerated as an iatric deity also on votive monuments from Delos, Aezani and Cyprus, Mitchell 2001: 106. In Dacia, Theos Hypsistos was worshipped as iatric god as well, Sanie 1978: 1108.

[1557] The author writes that the god's worshippers were most active in Tanais and Panticapaeum, Ustinova 1991: 177.

[1558] J. Ustinova differs seven forms of god's or gods' names as: Theos Hypsistos Pantokrator Eulogetos, Theos, Theos Hypsistos Epekoos, Theos Hypsistos, Theos Epekoos, Theos Bronton Epekoos and Theos Dikaios, Ibid: 178.

[1559] Different scholars like E. Schürer and I. Levinskaya suggest that the cult of Theos Hypsistos in Bosporus isn't Jewish or pagan, but a mixture, while J. Ustinova follows the earliest traces of the cult to indigenous celestial gods, adopted as patrons of Bosporus' kings, who were worshipped beside Jewish communities which venerated their own Hypsistos, Ibid: 282-283.

[1560] Ibid: 157.

[1561] Merlat 1951: 56-58, num. 62, Pl. IV.1.

[1562] On the votive monument from Troia, Aece, Jupiter Dolichenus' epithet is *exsuperantissimus*, *CIL* IX, 948.

[1563] The presentations of a god's bust carried by an eagle are known

type of iconographic presentation of Zeus Hypsistos, attested by a statue found in the god's temple in Dion in Macedonia, where the god is presented throned, with an eagle at his feet.[1564] Here, an almost identical marble statue of the god Jupiter Montanus found in the Danube Limes locality of Kladovo (Pontes), should be mentioned, where the deity is presented throned, with an eagle beside the throne. The dedication to the god is engraved on the base of the statue, from which we learn that the dedicant is a certain Marcus Lucius Romanus Marini(-us?, -ninus?, -anus?), augustal of the Drobeta colony. The monument dedicated to Jupiter Montanus from Kladovo, Pontes is dated between 271 and 330.[1565]

Devotees of Theos Hypsistos were named differently by Antique and Christian authors. Thus, Epiphanius, a bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, in his work *The Panarion* from 376, writes about the religious association of Massalians or Euchites, whose name, in his opinion, could be translated as 'the ones that pray'. The author mentions their presence in Antioch around 376 or 377 and states that they were pagans who acknowledge the existence of many gods, but respected only one, whom they called 'The All Mighty'.[1566] The terminology that Epiphanius uses for the description of the places where Massalians prayed, like certain similarities between them and Christians, clearly indicates that a relationship existed between the Massalians and Jews, that is, that a certain degree of Jewish influence on the formation and cult praxis of the Massaliens was present.[1567] In the funeral oration to his father, Gregory of Nazianzus describes the worshippers of the god Hypsistos with the term 'Hypsistarians', to whom his father also belonged before he became a Christian. The author also states that Hypsistarians were pagans who replaced worshipping gods with a worship of fire and lamp light, and the ones who respected the Sabbath and abstained from certain kinds of food, like the Jews, but, unlike the Jews, they did not practice circumcision. Hypsistarians accepted the existence of more gods, but worshipped only one – *Παντοκράτωρ.*[1568] The epithet, which is closely related with Jewish belief, appears in some dedications to Theos Hypsistos, like in four manumission tablets from Gorgippia and Panticapaeum, dated to the 1st century.[1569] They rejected idols and ritual sacrifices, but prayed to their god at sunrise and sunset. Epigraphic monuments imply the worshipping of Theos Hypsistos until the 5th century and to date no implication of any sacrifices exist, which confirms the ancient sources about the cult not being a sacrificial one. Different authors have discussed the presumptions that the god's devotees were already in the 2nd and the 3rd century inclined to monotheism, however, there are insufficient arguments to support this. The fact is, however, that the universal character of the deity contributed to his being favoured among many believers that belonged to different social classes. Different sources implicate the existence of the cult during the 4th century, like a letter written by Constantine the Great, in which a certain Aelafius is mentioned, who was a worshipper of Theos Hypsistos. Also, two laws from 408 and 409, were proclaimed, prohibiting the heretic group of Jewish believers, known as the *Caelicolae,* who were, in S. Mitchell's opinion, similar to the *θεοσεβείς* from the eastern provinces and who worshipped Theos Hypsistos. At the beginning of the 5th century, Cyril of Alexandria, the Patriarch of the city, wrote about the Hypsistarians as Theosebeis, *θεοσεβείς*, the god-fearers, whose beliefs, in his opinion, were very similar to those of the Jews.[1570] However, the author emphasises that they were not Jews nor pagans, but were caught between the Jewish and pagan culture. Like the Massalians, the God-fearers accepted the existence of other gods, but respected only one Most-High God. Thus, it is confirmed that Theos Hypsistos had his loyal devotees in the 5th century as well, to whom even Christians made vows.[1571]

3.2. The Cult of Theos Hypsistos in the Central Balkans

Although the cult of Theos Hypsistos is confirmed with over 370 inscriptions dating from the 1st century BC to the 4th century in the wide area from the Black Sea to Egypt (particularly in the Aegean and Asia Minor), in the territory of the Central Balkans Roman provinces it is attested, presumably, with only one votive monument discovered in the locality of Pirot (Tures) (cat. 1). Certain authors have also considered that a votive monument dedicated to Jupiter Paternus Aepilofius from Niš and a votive monument dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Montanus discovered in

from Serdica, Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 192, num. 3, 208. The image of a god with a thunderbolt and long sceptre is known from a votive monument dedicated to Theos Hypsistos from the locality Byblos, Du Mesnil du Buisson 1970: 71-72.

[1564] Belayche 2011: 165.

[1565] During archaeological excavations in the locality Pontes in 1979. year, a marble statue representing the god Jupiter on the throne, with an eagle beside the throne, was discovered. The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) Montano nomi/ne M(arci) Luci Romani Mari/ni(us) Aug(ustalis) col(oniae) / Dr<o=U>b(etae) ex vo/t<o=UM> in possessione sua posuit,* Garašanin, Vasić 1984: 48-52; Bošković-Robert 2006: num. 51; Mirković 2015: 48.

[1566] Epiphanius of Salamis writes that Messalians constructed houses (or spacious areas) known as *proseuchai* (eukteria), where they gathered, praying and singing hymns to their god, under the light of many lamps and torches, Mitchell 2001: 92-93.

[1567] Ibid: 94. Epiphanius states that Massalians' places of the congregation were named προςευχαι, that is prayer-houses. The term προςευχαι is attested epigraphically in the area of Jews, Trebilco 1991: 134, 241.

[1568] Mitchell 2001: 95.

[1569] Ustinova 1999: 177-178.

[1570] Actually, Cyril of Alexandria says that the religious worship of God-fearers doesn't belong solely to the Jewish custom nor to the Greek, but to both, Cyril of Alexandria, *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate,* 3.

[1571] The votive monument from Pontus dedicated to Hypsistos is ornamented with crosses, which implies that the dedicants were Christians, Ustinova 1999: 223.

the Danube Limes locality of Pontes, could be associated to Theos Hypsistos' cult. Thus, N. Vulić thought that the epithet Aepilofilius represented a Latin epithet for an indigenous Thracian or Dardanian god of unknown name, who was identified with the god Zeus Hypsistos.[1572] R. Marić considered that Jupiter Aepilofius was an *interpretatio Romana* of a celestial Thracian god who was equated with Zeus Hypsistos, while M. Šašel-Kos constates that under the epithet Aepilofilius an indigenous god is presented.[1573] To whichever god the dedication was made under the epithet Aepilofius, it is probable that he was an ancestral god to whom the epithet Paternus points, be it Thracian or Dardanian. The other disputable dedication is the already mentioned dedication from Kladovo of Marcus Lucius Romanus Marini (-us, -ninus, -anus?), erected to Jupiter Optimus Maimus Montanus. The epithet Montanus attests the mountain deity and it is known that Theos Hypsistos was venerated in Macedonia, Syria and Delos as such a divinity.[1574] However, since no conclusive arguments can be made in the context of both votive monuments from Niš and Pontes, it is most probable that they represent votive monuments dedicated to indigenous gods of similar character to Theos Hypsistos.

Returning to the votive monument from Pirot, it was found at the end of the 19th century, in 1886, in 1886 and it represents a fragmented monument with the inscription in Greek. It provoked quite a discussion in scholarly literature from the very moment of its discovery and I think that, because of the better understanding of the monument's significance and meaning, it is useful to offer a concise review of earlier opinions and conclusions made by different authors.

The dedication from the Pirot monument is made to 'the heedful Most High God' by a cultic association, *thiasos*, led by a priest and a prostates. The list of the thiasos' members is damaged and it ends with the words Θία [---] Σεβαζιανός.., which the first publisher of the monument, A. fon Domazevski, restored as *Θίασος* and connected it with the word *Σεβαζιανός,* concluding that the Pirot monument was dedicated to the god Theos Hypsistos, identified here with the god Sabazius. The author's opinion was supported by other scholars such as M. Rostovtzeff, M. Macrea, Ch. Picard, Sh. E. Johnson and P. R. Trebilco.[1575] F. Cumont particularly emphasised that the word *Σεβαζιανός* is derived from the word *Σεβαζιός*, and, therefore, Sabazius was, without any doubt, the god in question in Pirot monument.[1576] R. Marić thought that under the name of *θεώ επηκόω ύφιστψ,* some indigenous deity of the sky was presented, as can be confirmed on some monuments known from Thrace.[1577]

Another interpretation of the monument's inscription was offered by D. Detshcev, who, in the word *Σεβαζιανός,* saw a Thracian personal name numerously attested in Thrace, and not the name of the god Sabazius.[1578] This hypothesis was accepted by G. Gerov, M. Tatcheva-Hitova and I. Levinskaya, who think that because the word *Σεβαζιανός* is a personal name, the hypothesis about equating the god Theos Hypsistos and Sabazius cannot be accepted.[1579] I. Levinskaya even goes one step further, reviewing earlier opinions through the analysis of the words koinon, thiasos and Sebazianos from the Pirot monument[1580] and concludes that the monument is dedicated to the god Theos Hypsistos by his cultic association. In her analysis of the dedication from the Pirot monument, J. Ustinova, however, does not offer a final opinion but emphasises that, because the crucial line of the inscription is damaged, it would be advisable to not use it as proof that the god to whom the monument was dedicated was Theos Hypsistos.[1581]

After this short review of the existing opinions about the Pirot monument, I would like to offer some thoughts reminding that we are, primarily, dealing with a monument found in a locality that belonged to the border zone between Moesia Superior and Thrace, where first a fortification (at the end of the 1st century) and then a settlement (in the 2nd century) started to develop, known by the name of Tures and confirmed in *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti*. The fact that the locality was in the border zone with Thrace, where the cult of Theos Hypsistos is attested more than 20 times, could indicate that the worship of the god would not be surprising at all. If we turn to the hypothesis that certain authors have maintained, about the common equitation of Theos Hypsistos with different pagan gods, we will see that it does not, in fact, appear at all frequently.[1582] As far as I am aware of, only on a few monuments with

[1572] Bošković-Robert 2006: 257.
[1573] Marić 1933: 21, 55; Šašel-Kos 1998: 20.
[1574] Ustinova 1999: 221.
[1575] Ibid: 243.
[1576] Levinskaya 1996: 89.
[1577] Marić 1933: 21.
[1578] Levinskaya 1996: 90.
[1579] M. Tatcheva-Hitova cites the name of Thracian Sebazianos from the area of Pautalia as an argument that the name was a personal Thracian name and not the name of god Sabazius, Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 178.
[1580] The main point of I. Levinskaya argumentation is the fact that the word *σεβαζανός* is nowhere attested as an attribute, but as a personal name. Also, she points to the fact that attributes were rarely used with the word θιάσος, therefore the word *σεβαζανός* is more probably a personal name, than an attribute derived from the name of god Sabazius. In her opinion, the proposed words *θιάσος σεβαζανός* can't be interpreted as 'Sabazius' thiasos', but independently as 'thiasos' and a personal name of a dedicant who was a member of thiasos, Levinskaya 1996: 89-92.
[1581] Ustinova 1999: 243.
[1582] Here I am referring to the opinions of C. Roberts, T. C. Skeat and P. R. Trebilco. P. R. Trebilco quotes gods Sabazius, Mēn, Attis, Poseidon, Eshmun, Eshmun-Melquart and Helios, as the gods to whom the epithet Hypsistos was attributed, Trebilco 1991: 239, ft. 8. However, the epithet Hypsistos is attested several times with the names of Helios, Apollo, Attis and Isis, Levinskaya 1996: 92-93.

the names of the gods Helios, Attis and Isis, is the term Hypsistos attested.[1583] Therefore, the presumption that the god Theos Hypsistos was many times equated with pagan deities, cannot be accepted.

Besides the epithet Hypsistos on the votive monument from Pirot, the god has another epithet, 'heedful', *επηκός,* which indicates that he was aware of the prayers of his worshippers and attentive to them.[1584] The god Theos Hypsistos is known as *επηκός,* also from two votive monuments in Thrace, discovered in Serdica and Asenovgrad.[1585] The dedicant of Pirot's votive monument was a *thiasos,* which was a cultic association of the god, led by a priest Hermogenos and the chairman of the organisation (*προστατης*), Augustianos. As can be seen from the monument's inscription, all the *thiasos'* members were men, whose names imply their Greek, Roman or Oriental origin. This does not have to mean anything in particular since the cult of Theos Hypsistos was also popular with women – 1/10 of all dedications to the god were erected by women.[1586] Exclusive male membership in the *thiasos* of Theos Hypsistos, which is confirmed on the Pirot monument, is quite usual on all the god's monuments from Bosporan cities.[1587] The dedication to the deity was made through the priest and a patron of the *thiasos*. The function of a *προστατης* is quite difficult to define, since his obligations in a cultic association are not known except that by the definition of the word, Augustianos was a patron and a legal representative of the cultic association. However, since his name is mentioned right beside the name of the priest Hermogenos, it can be assumed that Augustianos, perhaps, also served as the priest's helper, the person who took care of the sacrifices and the organisation of the banquet. In the context of the *thiasos*' organisation, it was probably analogous to other known *thiasoi*, a voluntarily organised association, centred on the worship of a certain god, as is known of *thiasoi* that existed from the Hellenistic period (most frequently related to the god Dionysus or ecstatic cults). The *thiasos* had its priest, bursary, secretary, etc., that is to say, personnel that took care of administrative and cultic obligations.[1588] This would further indicate that the *thiasos* from the Pirot votive monument had certain regulations of *thiasos* organisation, which encompassed the details related to the associations' administratives, sacrifices, the temple of the deity, finances of the thiasos, etc. This would further imply the existence of a sanctuary or particular place in Pirot, where *thiasos* members would gather and venerate the god. Whether or not the *thiasos* from the votive monument found in Pirot represented a well organised cultic association cannot be determined, but what can be assumed is the chronological frame of the monument's dedication, which would be the 2nd century or the early 3rd century.[1589]

Since the Pirot votive monument represents the only monument from the Central Balkans that has a certain but not clear connection with the cult of Theos Hypsistos, it would be a fruitless task to presume the eventual aspects under which the deity in question was venerated. In the context of the presumtions that the *thiasos* was dedicated to the god Sabazius and not Theos Hypsistos, I would like to add one more thing that will not resolve the question as to whether the Pirot monument was dedicated to Theos Hypsistos or perhaps the god Sabazius under another god's name, but will clarify something that was quite vague in earlier literature. The assumed relationship between the gods Theos Hypsistos and Sabazius in Thrace has not been attested epigraphically or iconographically – the epithets that are attributed to Theos Hypsistos are not the same as those attributed to Sabazius, nor is the iconography known from several Thracian monuments of Theos Hypsistos identical to the imagery of Sabazius.[1590] In that context, I find it hard to believe that well-informed worshippers of Sabazius, of whom many were of Thracian descent, would have equated their god on the Pirot monument with Theos Hypsistos or hidden him under the name of another, equally favoured deity in Thrace, particularly since Hypsistos' cult was familiar in the province and the two gods were worshipped there separately, with their own particular epithets and iconography. This is best illustrated by the already mentioned votive altar dedicated to god Sabazius by the soldier Aurelios Mestrianos, which was also found in Pirot. However, a contrary example comes to mind, brilliantly offered by A. Chaniotis in the context of not taking different dedications to Theos Hypsistos as evidence of the existence of one Theos Hypsistos, originating from a single and homogeneous religious concept. The author discusses the example of two known dedications to Thea Hypsiste from the locality of Kula (Kollyda) in Lydia, who was an unknown local goddess, addressed with the epithet Hypsiste, perhaps under the influence of Theos Hypsistos being favoured or for some other reason.[1591] In the case of

[1583] Cook 1940; Hepding 1903: 208; Levinskaya 1996: 93.

[1584] The epithet *επηκός* is attributed to the names of gods Sabazius, Mēn, Artemis Anaetis, Pluto, Kora, Asclepius and particularly Serapis, *CCIS* III: 78-79.

[1585] M. Tacheva-Hitova notices that the epithet *επηκός* is attributed to the god's name mainly on the monuments from Danube provinces and Pontus, Tatcheva-Hitova 1977: 292-294.

[1586] Collar 2013: 259.

[1587] In Tanais, however, all or almost all free men belonged to the *collegia*. Members were of different origin, half of the names are Greek, while the other half is of Iranian origin, while in the 3rd century, the percentage of Iranian names increases, Ustinova 1991: 184-185.

[1588] Којић 1966: 185.

[1589] Levinskaya 1996: 89.

[1590] Ustinova 1991: 249.

[1591] A. Chaniotis wonders whether Kula's Thea Hypsiste was god's female hypostasis, a consort, a competitor or perhaps just a local goddess who was addressed with god's epithet under the favouring of his cult in the area of Kula. In the case of the second inscription from Kula, where the goddess is addressed also as a patroness of a

the Pirot monument, the situation is, in my opinion opposite and clear, we are dealing with a deity familiar to the population from the territory where his cult is attested numerous times, whether it is Theos Hypsistos or Sabazius. Since the restoration of the damaged part of the monument did not offer any new information that would provide any new hypothesis, we can only conclude that the monument was dedicated by a cultic association whose members were all men of Thracian and Greek descent, who were Romanised local residents (or perhaps some of them were already Roman citizens), and who could have been introduced into the cult of Theos Hypsistos or Sabazius by the members of a *thiasos* from some other nearby place,[1592] or perhaps not.

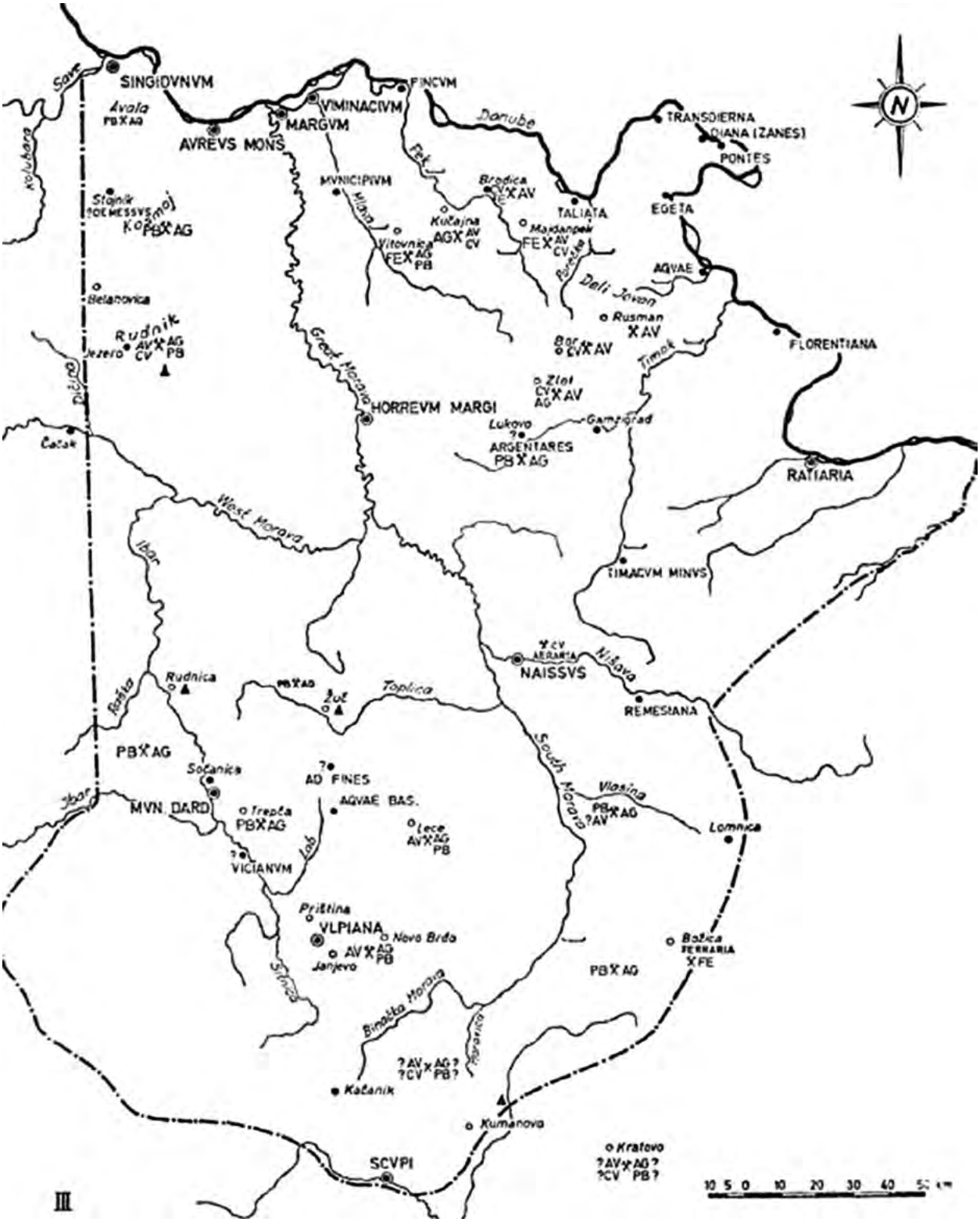
small community, the author is certain that the dedication is erected to the unknown local goddess to whom the epithet Hypsiste was attributed. However, he emphasises that it is not certain whether two inscriptions to Thea Hypsiste from Kula were dedicated to the same goddess, Chaniotis 2010: 120.

[1592] Thus M. Tacheva-Hitova in her assuming that Pirot monument is dedicated to Theos Hypsistos by the members of his *thiasos*, suggests that they could have been introduced to the deity's cult by the *koinon* of craftsmen and merchants from Serdica, Tatcheva-Hitova 1983: 198.

III Quarries, Workshops and their Localisation

Although the question of quarries and possible workshops where epigraphic and archaeological monuments related to Asia Minor and Syrian cults attested in the Central Balkans territory were produced has been mentioned in every chapter dedicated to a particular deity, here I would like to summarise the most important thesis regarding the stone quarries, mining districts and possible workshops in the Central Balkans territory. Epigraphic and archaeological monuments of Asia Minor and Syrian deities from the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans were made from varieties of limestone, chalk, different kinds of marble, other precious stones and bronze. Deposits of limestone and local stone are known from almost all parts of the Central Balkans and stone was mostly used for votive and funerary monuments, which were produced in workshops first formed in larger urban centres. The specific characteristics of particular varieties of stone indicate that urban centres such as Ratiaria, Singidunum, Viminacium, Naissus and Scupi had in their vicinity stone quarries from which they used raw material for monuments, and sculptural and statuary presentations (as is the case of the so-called Tašmajdan limestone, from which the majority of Roman monuments found in Singidunum was made).[1593] Deposits of locally exploited marble were used for sculptures, not for construction work or as decorative stone, and are known from some parts of the Central Balkans territory – high quality marble was exploited from the region of Požega and Aranđelovac, marble of dolomite origin from the vicinity of Straževica (Batočina), fine-grained white, grey and breccia marble from Rodočela and other kinds of marble from the areas of Sijerinska Banja (Leskovac) and Kosovo. However, high quality white marble was primarily imported from the quarries of the Mediterranean Basin in Greece and Asia Minor. Coarse grained marble from the Proconessus quarry and fine-grained marble from the Pentelicon quarry, Parian marble, marble from quarries on Himet (near Athens), Lesbos and Naksos and marble products from eastern Alpine quarries were imported in the period to the second half of the 2nd century, when the marble from Proconessus quarries became predominantly used for sculptural and statuary presentations.[1594] Certain coarse-grained marble monuments indicate imported material from quarries in the province of Macedonia (like the 'Sivečki quarry', near Prilep).[1595] For the transport of stone, Romans used waterways whenever it was possible, primarily by the Danube and then from the Danube ports to the Central Balkan cities, again by ships, if it was possible, or across land, if it was not. The southern parts of the territory were connected to the Danube by the rivers Beli Timok and Veliki Timok, through which stone was transported to other Dardanian centres.[1596] Large urban centres like Ratiaria, Viminacium, Singidunum, Naissus, Ulpiana and Scupi presented not only significant sculptural centres but also stonemasonry centres with workshops for votive and funerary monuments. The area of Kosmaj had quality stone workshops producing votive and funerary monuments in the period from Marcus Aurelius to Alexander Severus, by stonemasons from Viminacium or a town of the Sava valley, because the south Pannonian-Norican type of monument is more than obvious in the corpus of epigraphic and archaeological monuments from that area in the mentioned period.[1597] Imperial residences, like Felix Romuliana near Zaječar and Mediana near Naissus, excelled in their use of particularly expensive imported marble and porphyry, from which quality sculptures, statues, reliefs and architectural plastic were made by imperial artisans and in imperial workshops. From the second half of the 2nd century, local stonecutter workshops began to appear in smaller settlements, characterised by their unskilfully produced monuments and particular local characteristics (for example, in western parts of the territory, votive and funerary monuments are recognisable by the simple and geometrical modelling of human faces, disproportional and severe way of presenting human figures, etc.). Their workshops most probably existed in the areas of Komini (Municipium S), Kolovrat, Užice and Skelani (the presumed Municipium Malvesatium) from where the monuments were distributed to the area of Bajina Bašta.[1598]As for metal ores, in Metalla Ulpiana, Metalla Dardanica and Metalla Aeliana Pincensia, primarily lead, silver and copper were exploited and the development of metal workshops was similar to that of stonemasonry workshops; in larger centres, workshops existed from the earliest period, while in the later period workshops started to appear in smaller settlements as well.[1599]

[1593] Tomović 1993: 19.
[1594] Djurić, Mueller 2009: 122; Tomović 1993: 16-18.
[1595] Sokolovska 1988.
[1596] Dobruna-Salihu 2012: 315-315.
[1597] Mócsy 1974: 216.
[1598] Зотовић 1995: 99-100.
[1599] Dušanić 2010: 473-532; Mócsy 1974: 131-134.



Map of the mines in Moesia Superior
(Dušanić 2010: 476)

IV Palmyrene Funerary Monuments in the Central Balkans

The Palmyrene cults have, thus far, not been attested in the territory of the Roman Central Balkan as they have in the neighbouring provinces.[1600] However, the existence of two very significant funerary monuments of Palmyrene origin, situated in the National Museum in Belgrade, to which little attention has been paid in the past, made me reconsider my earlier opinion not to include these cults in this study, and to make a concise review about them, presenting their analysis and interpretation. I was particularly motivated by the appearance of a new article in 2018, in which the author repeats the same doubts expressed some 30 years ago by Prof. K. Parlasca, about the origin of the Palmyrene monuments at the National Museum in Belgrade.[1601] Since I noticed that the author of the article, J. M. Hutton, is not aware of the existence of the important article of I. Popović from 1993,[1602] where the author clearly proves the Singidunum provenience of the two Palmyrene funerary monuments, I am determined to once more repeat the arguments that prove the monuments were discovered in the territory of the Singidunum fortress or its vicinity and not acquired through the antiquities market or in some other way.[1603]

The two Palmyrene funerary monuments were published in earlier literature in catalogue form, without further analysis or interpretation.[1604] To them, I must add the existence of the third Palmyrene funerary monument, in the shape of a funerary stele, which was, for the first and last time, mentioned in the scholarly literature by I. Popović, in catalogue form.[1605] All three monuments are significant, belonging to different Palmyrene funerary types, particularly the first funerary monument presenting the head of a priest, presumably of the cult of the god Bel, which belonged to a sarcophagus lid. Before I present their analysis and interpretation, I would like to address, hopefully for the last time, the new, repeated doubts about the provienence of the monuments.

The context in which two of the three Palmyrene funerary monuments – the head of a priest and the *loculus* relief of a priest, came to the National Museum in Belgrade has already been discussed by I. Popović almost three decades ago. The author was motivated to follow all existing data about the monuments, from their first unofficial mention to their official entrance into the National museum's inventory books, because of the expressed doubts of Prof. K. Parlasca, who stated that the two Palmyrene funerary monuments were either a gift to Belgrade's National Museum or that they were bought by it.[1606] The monuments were first published in 1928, in Copenhagen, by H. Inholt, in his study 'Studier over Palmyrensk Skulptur'.[1607] In the oldest inventory data about the monuments, it is recorded that their place of finding was Belgrade.[1608] However, the catalogue record of the monuments, made later in 1931, by N. Vulić, created confusion in the later literature, because of his sentence that 'it is said that the monuments were found in Belgrade Fortress.'[1609] This was the first time in the scholarly literature that, as the place of monuments' finding, Belgrade fortress is mentioned, which is solely the responsibility of N. Vulić, since this information is not present in the oldest inventory record of the National Museum. The personal assumption of N. Vulić that the monuments were found in the territory of Belgrade Fortress is easy to understand – the area of the Roman castrum and its vicinity were the only logical places where the monuments could have been excavated, since they represented the territory of the Roman fort and settlement in Singidunum, during Antiquity. Nevertheless, the problem of the monuments not being recorded in inventory books earlier than 1927 has to be explained. The National Museum in Belgrade was founded in 1844 and only in 1881 was M. Valtrović appointed as the museum's conservator. During that period, the two Palmyrene monuments are not mentioned, either as gifts to the museum from

[1600] For example, in Dacia the cults of gods Bel, Malachbel and Yarhibol were confirmed – the cult of the god Bel has been known from two inscriptions found in Tibiscum and Porolissum, the cult of god Malachbel was attested with two inscriptions from Tibiscum and five inscriptions from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa and the cult of deity Yarhibol was affirmed with two votive altars from Apulum and one votive monument from Tibiscum, Nicolae 2011: 67-68.

[1601] Hutton 2018: 113-123.

[1602] Popović 1993: 71-76.

[1603] Since the article about Palmyrene funerary monuments from the National Museum in Belgrade by the author of this publication is in print, the concise review will be presented here.

[1604] Вулић 1931: 231, n. 615, 235, n. 625, 626; Гарашанин 1954: 64, fig.37; Grbić 1958: 101, T. LXX; *IMS* 1976: 85, n. 72; Cambi *et al.* 1987: 197, n. 145; Popović 1991: 71–76, Fig. 1–3; Tomović 1993: n. 6, Fig. 2.1–2, Fig. 4.4.

[1605] Popović 1993: 71, fig. 3.

[1606] Two Palmyrene funerary monuments representing the priests were first recorded in the museum's inventory books in 1927. year, under the inv. numbers 660 and 1593, Ibid: 71.

[1607] H. Ingholt obtained the information about the monuments from prof. V. Petković, director of National Museum in Belgrade.

[1608] The recording of M. Grbić that two Palmyrene funerary monuments were excavated in Belgrade, Popović 1993: 73.

[1609] Вулић 1931: 235.

Prince Miloš Obrenović or as acquisitions.[1610] The first inventory record of the National Museum dates from 1871, only to be continued in 1881. The monuments are also not mentioned in the list of monuments from the National Museum, made by E. Kalinka and A. Swoboda in 1888 (published in 1890).[1611] In the earliest general inventory of the National Museum from 1900, there is again no information about the Palmyrene monuments in the museum's rooms. However, in 1892, a lapidarium of the National Museum was placed in the yard of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade and many other monuments, that were not inventoried, were situated there. It is quite possible that after 1888 (after E. Kalinka and A. Swoboda's visit to the National Museum), the two monuments were accidentally found (as many other monuments from the Roman and Middle age period) during some building works in the centre of the city and transferred to the National Museum's lapidarium. As I. Popović points out, it would not be the first time, nor would the National Museum be the first museum, where monuments found during some building works were discovered and put in the lapidarium for later documenting. The period of World War I left Belgrade ravaged, with many defensive trenches excavated in the territory of Belgrade Fortress. During that time, the lapidarium of the National Museum served as a storage area for building material and monuments that were found. After World War I, years passed until, in 1925, the restoration of the National Museum's lapidarium began. It was shortly after, in 1927, that the two Palmyrene funerary monuments were recorded for the first time in the museum's inventory books, along with many other monuments belonging to the Roman and Medieval epoch. There is no data about them being bought as gifts or being acquired in some other way (for example, from an antiquity market), nor is there any doubt about their Belgrade provenience, bearing in mind that Oriental immigrants of all professions and social strata were epigraphically and archaeologically confirmed in the territory of Singidunum,[1612] but also in its surroundings, in the area of Kosmaj, being employed in the mines, particularly since Singidunum was one of the larger important centres on the Danube Limes. Enclaves of Syrians have been confirmed in Sirmium, Mursa, Savaria, and Intercisa, but particularly important is the fact that Palmyrians were attested in more than 30 inscriptions from different localities in Dacia, mainly from Tibiscum.[1613] The presence of a considerable number of Palmyrians in Dacia, who continued to venerate their ancestral gods Bel, Malachbel and Iarhibol in Dacia, is explained by the presence of three military units, whose soldiers were recruited from Palmyra or its vicinity.[1614] Particularly interesting is a bilingual inscription found in Sarmizegetusa, with Aramean text and the name of a priest GWARA, confirmed in the lists of priests from Sarmizegetusa, whose name is also common in Palmyra and Dura-Europos.[1615] Contact between Singidunum and Dacia was frequent and it is quite normal that among many ethnicities, the Palmyriens also came to or passed through Singidunum, whether while in military service or as priests, merchants, artisans, freedmen or slaves. J. M. Hutton's arguments that the two Palmyrene monuments from the National Museum in Belgrade were either bought at an antiquities market or obtained in some other way rely on the fact that N. Vulić was reporting hearsay regarding the provenience of the Palmyrene monuments and the fact that Roman soldiers would not have carried with them heavy stone funerary monuments as loot. I have already addressed the first point to which J. M. Hutton is referring, that the statement of N. Vulić was solely his own, based on no arguments and thus presenting his own hypothesis. As for the possibility that Roman soldiers would not choose to carry heavy funerary stone monuments as a loot, it is true that anyone would rather choose smaller and lighter movable objects for loot, than two heavy stone monuments.[1616] But, then again, why should stone monuments represent only loot – they could have been a possession of some Palmyrian or Palmyrians who served in the Roman army or were somehow related to the army or were priests, distinguished people, etc., who brought the monuments with them to their new settlement of Singidunum for some reason. Other possibilities are probable too, but I want to address something else that J. M. Hutton emphasises in his arguments – the fact that the monuments represent true works of Palmyrene sepulchral art and that they could not have been made in Moesia Superior or Dacia or anywhere else for that matter, except in Palmyra. I do not see the relevance of J. M. Hutton mentioning this, because in earlier literature no authors disputed the Palmyrene origin of the monuments in the context of their modelling.[1617] If the existance of Asia Minor and Syrian residents in Singidunum had not been attested,

[1610] The data from the archive of the National Museum in Belgrade, Popović 1993: 74.

[1611] The Palmyrene funerary monuments are not among the stone monuments seen by E. Kalinka and A. Swoboda in 1888. year, for details see Kalinka E., Swoboda A. 1890. Archäologisch-epigraphiche Mitthelungen aus Österreich-üngarn, XIII, Vienna. 11-43 (the part about the monuments from Belgrade's National museum 29-43).

[1612] *IMS* I: 40.

[1613] Popović 1993: 76.

[1614] Numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium, numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium and numerus Palmyrenorum 0 (...) were stationed in Dacia during Antiquity, encompassing Palmyrians recruited earliest in 120 (and later in 126, attested by two military diplomas). The first Palmyrians were rewarded Roman citizenship by Hadrian who brought them from Palmyra, where he was a governor. Palmyrian numeri were confirmed in Tibiscum and Porolissum, Cretulescu, Muresan 2013: 55.

[1615] Popović 1993: 76. Three bilingual tombstones were confirmed at Tibiscum and one of them is dedicated to Aelius Guras Iiddei Byhis, heir of the priest Aelius Habibis, Cretulescu, Muresan 2013: 57.

[1616] If the monuments were transferred, for example, from Dacia to Singidunum, it wouldn't present any trouble because of the existence of land and river transportation.

[1617] Popović 1993: 76.

epigraphically or archaeologically, then I would be inclined to think again. However, since we know of many attestations of an Asia Minor and Syrian presence in Singidunum and its vicinity as well, I would conclude that the presence of two funerary monuments from Palmyra in the territory of one of the largest urban centres and military camps in the Central Balkans, as Singidunum was, is not surprising at all.

Returning to two funerary monuments of Palmyrene priests from the National Museum in Belgrade, the first monument presents a portrait bust of a priest which, judging by the head's size, method of modelling (full sculpture) and the way that the head was damaged, was a part of a sculpture of a priest reclining in a funerary banquet, most probably from a sarcophagus lid or a sarcophagus box.[1618] The head of the priest represents a head of a young man carved in limestone, of 30 cm total height (the height of the face is 14 cm and the width of the face 15 cm, slightly less than life size). It has been broken off at neck height and the hat on the priest's head is slightly damaged on its frontal side. The young man is presented with the typical cylindrical headgear of a Palmyrene priest – a modius.[1619] Around the modius, there is a laurel wreath with a medallion in the centre with a bust of a young beardless man. The priest is presented hairless and beardless. His face is oval, with the forehead completely concealed by a high headdress, large and oval eyes with incised irises and pupils and heavily defined, long, curved eyebrows. The nose is straight and well modelled as are the lips (the lower lip is fuller), on which a slight smile is implied, which gives a composed facial expression to a young man's face. The chin is quite prominent and the ears are slightly sticking out. Stylistically, the facial traits of the head are simplified, with well modelled details (like the laurel wreath and the ears), combined with the somewhat stiff facial features, which deprive the face of a natural look. There are no traces of paint on the priest's head, but judging by other known analogies, it can be presumed that it was painted.[1620] There are visible cracks and punctuations on the face (in the area of the cheeks and the chin), but all the main portrait details are well preserved, which allows us to analyse the sculpted head more thoroughly. As has already been mentioned, there is a particular kind of hat, known as a *modius* on the young man's head, which suggests that he was a priest. That is to say, it has been generally accepted that the modius is a symbol of the Palmyrene

The head of the priest from National Museum in Belgrade (photo-documentation: National Museum Belgrade)

[1618] There is little possibility that the head of a priest from the National Museum in Belgrade represented part of a freestanding sculpture, because of their rareness. Funerary priestly representations from Palmyra can be divided into several groups by the type of the sculpture to which they belong: portraits on loculus reliefs, portraits on sarcophagi-lids and sarcophagi boxes, portraits on banqueting reliefs, portraits on freestanding sculpture in the round, portraits on stelae-shaped loculus reliefs and portraits in ceiling decoration, Raja 2016: 130.

[1619] *Modius* is the term used for describing a cylindrical hat with a flat top, different from the characteristic hat in the form of a complete cone with an apex which is usually worn by the priests in the Roman Near East, Dirven 2011: 205; Blömer 2015a: 185–189. As H. Ingholt noticed, there were several variations of a basic modius represented in Palmyrene art: plain modius, modius with a wreath with a rosette in the centre or with a medallion with a small bust in the centre, Ingholt 1934: 34–35. Although in any Palmyrene representation of a man with a modius there is no confirmation that he is a priest, Palmyrene funerary inscriptions testify about the professions of the represented deceased and therefore indirectly confirm that the modius was worn by Palmyrene priests, Raja 2015: 340. Additionally, Palmyrene funerary representations of men with modius represented beside them (on a pedestal next to them or held by a person presenting it to them) have been interpreted as the representations of former priests, whose status marker is modius, Kaizer 2002: 236; Raja 2017a: 426.

[1620] Colledge 1976: 119. As D. Wielgosz-Rondolino showed, the paint was used on Palmyrene sculptures even in the earliest period of their modelling, in the 1st century, consisting of most frequently used red paint (probably red ochre), combined with a range of colours (white, yellow, black), which can be best observed in one of the most famous Palmyrene funerary reliefs, known as the 'Beauty of Palmyra' from the tomb of Qasr Abjad, Wielgosz-Rondolino 2016: 178; Raja, Højen Sørensen 2015: 447–450.

priesthood,[1621] although, as different authors remark, there have been no inscriptions, so far, next to an image of a person wearing a modius that would confirm his identity as a priest.[1622] However, inscriptions which accompany similar images of men with shaven heads and faces, with modii on their heads are known from so-called banqueting *tesserae* (small terracotta squares probably used as admission tickets to sacred funeral banquets) and identify them as priests, as do funerary sculptures and reliefs from Palmyrene tombs and sanctuaries, which show men with modii on their heads performing ritual sacrifices.[1623] Palmyrene priests are depicted wearing a modius on their head outside Palmyra as well (for example, on two Palmyrene reliefs from a temple of the Gadde in Dura-Europos),[1624] thus distinguishing themselves among other Syrian priests. Some modii were unadorned, while some, like the one on the priest's head from the National Museum in Belgrade, had a laurel wreath encircling the modius.[1625] As M. A. Colledge reminds us, the image of a wreath is presented very frequently in Palmyrene tesserae and in early Palmyrene sculpture it is shown in the hands of a guardian goddess or priests. However, a wreath encircling a modius in Palmyrene sculptures of priests is not known until 130–140.[1626] The wreaths presented on a modius could have been of laurel, olive and oak foliage, probably made with gold, which is suggested by traces of gilding found on one wreath.[1627] Many questions and hypotheses about the use and significance of wreaths on the modii of Palmyrene priests have been posed in the past and some authors think that the wreath is a sign of the apotheosis of a dead priest, while other scholars suggest that the wreath is a sign of priestly dignity.[1628] In the centre of the wreath on the modius of the priest's head from the National Museum in Belgrade, a miniature bust of a young, beardless man wearing a tunic and a cloak, is presented.[1629] This type of modius, encircled with a wreath adorned with a miniature portrait bust in the centre, represents the most elaborate type of modius [1630] Various authors differently interpret the symbolism of the miniature busts in the centre of the modius' wreaths, which can be beardless or with a beard. Thus, H. Ingholt regards them as 'badges of civic distinction given either by the city or by the religious authorities' (in his opinion, a bearded bust implies that the priest was appointed by the city, while a beardless bust indicates that the priest was appointed by the clergy).[1631] Some authors interpreted them as a symbol of a certain rank in the priestly hierarchy, while others, like M. Gawlikowski, suggest that the busts presented in the centre of the wreath on a modius symbolise a connection to some ancestral cult (in the context of the ancestor first becoming a hero and then the object of an ancestoral cult).[1632] Representations of Palmyrene priests carrying a modius with a wreath are quite rare – a search of the database within the Palmyra Portrait Project showed that from a selection of 700 portraits, only 68 were presented with a modius, of which only 25 had a wreath tied around it. In our attempt to find out more about the Palmyrene priest's head from the National Museum in Belgrade, we should also pose the question about the symbolism of the wreath presented on the modius. R. Stucky believed that the different kinds of foliage used for the wreaths on modii indicated priests of different gods – thus, a wreath of olive leaves implied a priest of the god Baalshamin, while a wreath of laurel indicated a priest of the god Bel.[1633] If the previously mentioned hypothesis regarding the symbolism of busts on a central medallion on the modius' wreath and the meaning of different wreath leaves indicating different gods are to be taken into account when considering the interpretation of the priest's head from the National Museum in Belgrade, then the head of the priest could represent a Palmyrene priest of the god Bel, who acquired his position by being appointed by the clergy. Judging by the stylistic characteristics – large eyes with incised pupils, large ears, straight nose and softly modelled lips, the head of the priest belongs to the first group of Palmyrene portraits, according to H. Ingholt's classification,[1634] and is analogous to several known priestly busts, like the sculpture of a priest from a private collection in Beirut[1635] or the head of a priest from a loculus relief

[1621] Ingholt 1934: 33–35.
[1622] Raja 2015: 340; Heyn 2008: 184.
[1623] Stucky 1973: 163-180. Pictorial evidence in Palmyrene public and funerary portraiture and banqueting tesserae is abundant, contrary to the literary evidence for Palmyrene priests. However, the public and funerary sculptures offer more than enough evidence that hairless and beardless men wearing modii on their heads were priests – a very interesting example of even three generations of priests can be seen on a relief from the temple of Nebu, Raja 2016: 129–130. For more about so-called funeral banquet tesserae see Raja 2016a: 340–371.
[1624] Dirven 2011: 205, fig. 12.2.
[1625] R. Stucky implies that the modius could have been made of felt, Stucky 1973: 172.
[1626] Colledge 1976: 140.
[1627] Stucky 1973: 173.
[1628] R. du Mesnil du Buisson and M. Gawlikowski thought that the wreath is a sing of apotheosis of a dead priest, while M. Ingholt and H. Seyring were of opinion that the wreath encircling the modius is a sign of a priestly dignity, Stucky 1973: 177.
[1629] It is presumed that from Hadrianic period to the 3rd century, modius was encircled with a wreath which had a central medallion with either male beardless bust or a bust of a priest with a modius in his head, Raja 2015: 341.
[1630] Heyn 2008: 189.
[1631] Ingholt 1934: 36.
[1632] Heyn 2008: 189; Raja 2015: 342.
[1633] R. Stucky thinks that a wreath of olive leaves indicates the priest of Baalshamin, because the priests with olive branches were represented in the relief of Baalshamin temple. The wreath of laurel, in author's opinion, implies the priest of god Bel, because on the tesserae of Bel's thiasos, laurel branches are often depicted (although R. Stucky admits that laurel leaves appear too on the tesserae with images of other deities), Stucky 1973: 177-178.
[1634] Ingholt 1928: 90–93.
[1635] The sculpture of a priest from a private collection in Beirut bears a striking similarity to the head of a priest from the National Museum in Belgrade. The sculpture represents a young priest with a wreathed modius and a central medallion with a beardless bust of

Loculus relief of the priest from National Museum in Belgrade
(photo-documentation: National Museum Belgrade)

held in the British Museum, dated between 50–150.[1636] Very similar facial traits and expression can be seen on the face of a sculpture of a husband presented on a funeral banquet relief dated between 100–130 or a priest from a hypogeum of Artaban.[1637] As I have already mentioned, the head of the priest from the National Museum was probably originally attached to a sculpture decorating a sarcophagus lid, similar, for example, to sculptures represented on a sarcophagus lid from the Hypogeum of Yarhai, in the west exedra of the central triclinium, in the Valley of the Tombs (the sculptural group consisting of a seated woman, two reclining priests and two standing individuals, a priest and a man)[1638] or the sculptural group of a priest Barateh with family members, in the courtyard of the Palmyra Museum.[1639] The head of the Palmyrene priest from the National Museum in Belgrade can be more precisely dated between 130/40–150.

The second Palmyrene funerary sculpture from the National Museum represents a limestone sculpture of a priest on a so-called *loculus* relief.[1640] Loculi reliefs represent one of the types of Palmyrene funerary sculpture, made on more or less rectangular slabs mostly of local limestone, depicting a bust or a half-figure of the deceased, shown alone or with members of the family. Besides the representation of the deceased, there is often a Palmyrene Aramaic inscription with the name of deceased (and if other persons are presented besides

a young man on it, holding a laurel branch in his left hand. Based on small dimensions of the sculpture (0,92m) and untreated backside of the sculpture, R. Stucky presumes that the sculpture of a priest from Beirut perhaps stood on a console of a street colonnade or in a sanctuary of the god to whose cult the priest belonged to, Stucky 1973: 166, fig. 3.

[1636] Raja 2016: 133, fig.1.

[1637] Sadurska 1994: 16–17, fig. 6, fig. 8.

[1638] Raja 2017a: 439, fig. 6.

[1639] Heyn 2008: 172– 173, fig. 6–2.

[1640] Loculus relief of a Palmyrene priest from National Museum in Belgrade is carved in white limestone, dim. 51x43x24cm, inv. num. 09_2985.

the deceased, their names are also included).[1641] Loculi reliefs served the purpose of sealing the compartment where the deceased was buried (whether in above-ground, so-called tower tombs or subterranean large tombs or hypogea).[1642] It is presumed that they were probably copied from the freedman reliefs produced in Rome, by the indigenous population in Syria or in Palmyra in the 1st century.[1643]The loculus relief from the National Museum depicts the half-figure of a Palmyrene priest, identified by his wreathed modius with an elongated empty medallion on its centre. The sculpture is presented in high relief, frontally, approximately up to the waist. The face of the young hairless and beardless man is oval, with elongated eyes lacking pupils, almost schematically carved, with heavy eyebrows emphasised with incision marks. The nose is relatively long with wider nostrils. The young man's mouth is small and well shaped, as the chin, and the ears are large. The priest is dressed in a tunic depicted as a series of V-shaped folds, over which is a himation, which is also folded. The priest's right hand, with all fingers stretched, is depicted in a sling of the himation and with it he is holding the folds of the himation thrown over his left shoulder. His left arm is bent at the elbow, which is pressed onto his body and in his left hand, whose index finger is extended, the priest is holding a schedula.[1644] Both hands of the priest are quite big. Above his left shoulder, a text in Palmyrene Aramaic is inscribed in four rows: ' 'MWN BR | NŠ' 'G'| ŠLM' | HBL' (' 'Ammôn son of Nesha (son of) 'Ogga (son of) Shalma, Alas!').[1645] Therefore, on the loculus relief from the National Museum in Belgrade, the priest Ammôn is presented in the same way as most of the males featured in bust form in Palmyrene funerary sculpture are presented – wearing 'Graeco-Roman' dress (tunic with a draped cloak) in an arm-sling arrangement (right arm presented in a sling of the folds of the cloak), which is typical for Roman funerary reliefs dated to the Late Republican period and the early Empire.[1646] Although the young man from the loculus relief from the National Museum is not holding any attributes associated with sacerdotal activities, like a jug, a bowl for incense, a balsamarium, olive branch, etc., it can be presumed that he is a priest judging by the wreathed modius on his head. Although the wreath is sculpted quite schematically (as the whole presentation of the priest Ammôn), the wreath encircling the modius is made of laurel foliage and has an empty oval medallion in the centre, which could have been made of gold.[1647] As was previously mentioned, from the 1st century BC, in Roman funerary reliefs, it became popular to present men with their right arms in the sling of a toga, with the fingers of the right hand usually extended. The same position of the right arm in a cloak sling and the right hand with extended fingers over the fold of the cloak can be observed in the majority of Palmyrene loculus reliefs (251 of the 323 Palmyrene male portraits are represented in the described way)[1648] and in that context, the representation of the priest Ammôn from the National Museum represents no exception. However, on the left hand of the priest Ammôn only the index finger is extended, while the other fingers are clenched. As M. Heyn discusses, on Palmyrene funerary male portraits, contrary to the right hand, the left hand displays more gesture variations – after the most frequent gesture of all fingers being extended or clenched, the second most frequently represented gesture of the left hand in male relief busts is that where only the index finger is extended, while the other fingers are clenched.[1649] In funerary representations of priests and men holding sacerdotal objects, the extension of the index finger of the left hand was very popular. The reason for the popularity of this gesture among priests and participants in religious representations is not known. As has already been mentioned, in the left hand of the priest Ammôn, there is a writing attribute presented: a book roll known as a schedula. H. Ingholt was the first author to introduce the term for this writing attribute, which resembles a narrow tablet, but has a trapezoidal rather than a rectangular shape.[1650] The representation of a schedula in Palmyrene funerary sculpture (mostly held in the left hand by men in relief portraits) increased in number from the 2nd century, replacing from that time images of tablets.[1651] The schedula represented on the funerary loculus relief with the image of the priest Ammôn, belongs to the second type of schedulae, which have a curved end and sometimes the engraved name of the deceased on them.[1652] Interpreting the representations

[1641] Within the group of so-called loculus reliefs, there is a sub-group of loculus banqueting reliefs, presenting a reclining deceased on a klyne, accompanied by a wife or by family members, Raja 2016: 127.

[1642] Hennig 2013: 159–176.

[1643] Kropp, Raja 2014: 395.

[1644] A *schedula* is the writing attribute that priest Ammôn holds, which was previously wrongly identified as a scroll, Cambi *et al.* 1987: 211, n. 175. The schedula represents one of the items belonging to the group of writing attributes, with which the images of deceased on Palmyrene funerary portraiture were presented: tablet (tabula), stylus, wax tablet, roll (volumen), diptych, codexes and double schedula, Sokolowski 2014: 378.

[1645] *IMS* I 85–86, num. 72

[1646] Heyn 2008: 170.

[1647] R. Stucky describes that some of the modii were adorned with a rosette or round/oval empty medallion in the centre. Some medallions were made of gold, judging by the traces of gilding visible on the medallion of some heads of the Palmyrene priests, Stucky 1973: 174.

[1648] Heyn 2010: 634.

[1649] Ibid: T. 2.

[1650] Sokolowski 2014: 380– 381.

[1651] Colledge 1976: 69, 247–253.

[1652] The shape of the first type of schedulae is straight, while the shape of the second type of schedulae is curved. The first tipe of schedula is almost twice more often presented on the Palmyrene funerary portraiture, than the second one, Sokolowski 2014: 379, T. 1. On the schedulae of the second type, a name of deceased can be engraved, like in the case of Bennuri whose name was engraved in Aramaic. A. Sadurska thinks that the second type of schedulae actually represent a stylized depiction of keys (because of their curved end), but L. Sokolowski remarks that in Palmyrene funerary sculpture keys

of priests with a schedula in their left hand, H. Ingholt thought that depicted writing attribute, perhaps, had a certain role in the funeral rites, had some religious significance or represented the deed of the tomb (documents that prove legal title to the burial place).[1653] Whatever the symbolism of the schedula was, in this particular case, presented in the hand of the priest, it emphasised even more the high social status of the deceased in the context of his erudition and knowledge. Ichnographically, the loculus relief of the priest Ammôn is analogous to the presentation of the priest Yarhibôlâ, which was originally in one of the tower tombs or hypogea of Palmyra (later added to the collection of the Museum of Archaeology in Beirut).[1654] Stylistically, the loculus relief of the priest Ammôn is carved only with a chisel and represents quite rigid and schematic work, with some details well depicted (mouth and chin). It bears a certain similarity in the facial traits of the head and stylistic features of the modius to a fragmented funerary relief of a priestly bust from the Vatican Museums, dated to the second half of the 2nd century[1655] and is very similar in the details of the dress modelling and hand gestures to a depiction of a man from a loculus relief from the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul, dated between 230–250,[1656] while the facial traits are stylistically close to the priest's head from a loculus relief situated in Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, dated to the 3rd century.[1657]

As was already mentioned, loculus reliefs present the most common type of Palmyrene funerary sculpture, where the deceased is depicted in a frontal pose with an inscription in Palmyrene Aramaic above his/her shoulder that contains the name and genealogy of the deceased, with the earliest dated funerary portrait from 65/6.[1658] The largest group of priestly representations actually comes from loculus reliefs – around 90 priestly portraits.[1659] After the analysis of numerous examples of priestly representations on loculus reliefs, R. Raja concluded that they are almost always depicted alone, without family members.[1660] Therefore, the inscriptions in Palmyrene Aramaic which accompany the priestly representations on loculus reliefs, attest to the genealogy of the family, but do not point to other family relationships, which is the case in other representations of deceased.[1661] Stylistic characteristics of the loculus relief of the priest Ammôn from the National Museum

Funerary stele of a young girl from National Museum in Belgrade
(photo-documentation: National Museum Belgrade)

in Belgrade imply the period between 230-250 as the time-span for its modelling.

The third Palmyrene funerary sculpture from the National Museum, has nothing to do with the Palmyrene priesthood or cults, therefore, I will make a concise review about it because of its significance of being a testimony of Palmyrene sepulchral art in Central Balkans territory. It is a high-relief funerary limestone stele, on which a young girl is frontally represented standing with her right arm held alongside her body and her left arm bent at the elbow and set

are always represented as L-shaped, not in a trapezoidal shape, Ibid: 381.

[1653] Ingholt 1934: 33.

[1654] Ibid: 32.

[1655] Novello, Tiussi 2017: 101, cat. 7.

[1656] Raja 2017: 118, fig.3.

[1657] Raja 2018: 15.

[1658] Heyn 2010: 631-632.

[1659] Raja 2016: 132.

[1660] R. Raja writes that out of 87 examples of loculus reliefs representations of priests, only in four cases they are depicted with other family members, Raja 2017: 123.

[1661] Raja 2016: 132-133.

across her chest.[1662] Unfortunately, the representation of the girl is damaged in the area of her face, but it can be distinguished that on her oval face, the eyes were well depicted and slightly elongated with incised pupils and with slightly curved eyebrows. The girl's hair is styled in wavy strands, brushed forward, with the length to the middle of her neck. Her forehead is well modelled and her ears are quite large. The girl is dressed in a long chiton, with emphasised folds on the arms and a series of V-shaped plaits on the upper part of the girl's body. In her right hand, the girl holds a bunch of grapes, while in her left hand she holds a bird, probably a dove or a pigeon. Above her left shoulder, there is an inscription in Palmyrene Aramaic, but due to its deterioration it is unreadable. The largest group of the Palmyrene funerary sculpture is represented by loculus reliefs, within which is a sub-group consisting of smaller size stelae with representations of full-length figures (approx. 50cm high). This type of funerary sculpture was presumably adapted by Palmyrene artists from earlier free-standing funerary stelae, for their use inside tombs and, over time, became of a rectangular shape, as loculus reliefs.[1663] During the 1st century, these stelae were used for closing burial chambers' loculi, where the deceased was buried, but never achieved the popularity of loculus reliefs, they ceased to be used during the late second half of the 2nd century. Most frequent representations on this sub-type of Palmyrene funerary sculpture are depictions of women with children, but from the end of the 1st century through the 2nd century, their popularity decreased in favour of group portraits.[1664] Children alone are not frequently depicted in Palmyrene funerary sculpture – usually they are represented with their parents (most often their mothers), thus, in the opinion of R. Raja, underlying the status that motherhood had in Palmyrene society.[1665] Besides loculus stelae, children were also depicted in banquet reliefs, sarcophagi and wall paintings, always easily recognised by their attributes, smaller size and clothing. As M. A. R. Colledge observes, children were shown differently, according to their sex and various attributes – girls were distinguishable from boys by their hairstyles and dress: they were depicted wearing a long folded chiton, while boys were dressed in a short tunic with trousers.[1666] In many Palmyrene loculus stelae, like in antecedent Greek funerary reliefs, children were presented with two characteristic attributes that symbolised childhood: a bird and a bunch of grapes.[1667] In loculus reliefs, 36.4 percent of monuments represent images of girls, while 63.6 percent represent depictions of boys.[1668] Although the bird which a child holds is usually of an unknown kind, it can be presumed that the girl from the loculus stele from the National Museum in Belgrade is, perhaps, holding a sacred dove of the Syrian goddess Atargatis (in Roman period Dea Syria) or the girl's pet pigeon.[1669] Ichnographically, the representation of the girl from the loculus stele from the National Museum is very similar to the depiction of a girl from the funerary stele from the Colket collection[1670] and by the treatment of the dress and the attributes of a bird and grapes is analogous to the depiction of a girl from the stele from the hypogeum of Sassan.[1671] By the stylistic and technical features concerning the treatment of the girl's face and the modelling of the folds of the dress, the representation from the funerary stele from Belgrade is close that of the boy Masheku from a limestone loculus stele dated to the 2nd century and a stele representation of a boy holding a bird and bunch of grapes from Paris.[1672] The stylistic features of the representation from the National Museum Palmyrene funerary monument imply the middle or the second half of the 2nd century as the possible period of the stele's carving – there is no dorsalium presented on the stele, the girl's dress is not so richly folded but with wide folds and the girl's right arm is held to the side and not completely outstretched like in the child representations from stelae dated to later in the 2nd century.[1673] Therefore, the proposed time span for the funerary stele with a representation of a girl with a bird and grapes from the National Museum in Belgrade would be between 140–170.

From the more than 3,000 portraits that the corpus of Palmyrene funerary sculpture encompasses in the Palmyra Portrait Project, up to 25 percent of all male representations show priests, about 10 percent of all Palmyrene funerary representations (more than 300 funerary portraits),[1674] while on around 7 percent of the monuments, children are depicted. Priests represented the elite of Palmyrene society and were a highly desired service. Judging from numerous inscriptions from Palmyra, the priestly function was hereditary – it was transferred from father to son. However, in some cases, like in the case of certain Haddudan, the priestly function could be paid for. Besides representing the social elite, priests also belonged to wealthy families and, therefore, had a prominent position and influence in Palmyrene society.

After the analysis and interpretation of the two Palmyrene funerary sculptures of priests, from the

[1662] The funerary stele dimensions are: 55,5x28,5cm, inv. num. 09_2939.
[1663] Colledge 1976: 239; Krag, Raja 2016: 136.
[1664] Krag, Raja 2016: 155.
[1665] Raja 2017a: 428–429.
[1666] Colledge 1976: 67.
[1667] Ibid: 156; for the examples, see Sadurska, Bounni 1994: 67–68, n. 92, fig. 18, 68–69, n. 94, fig.12, 97, n. 131, fig. 6, 97–98, n. 132, fig. 7 etc.
[1668] Krag, Raja 2016: 143.
[1669] Colledge 1976: 158.
[1670] Albertson 2000: 160–162, fig. 1.
[1671] Sadurska, Bounni 1994: 82, fig. 17.
[1672] Raja 2016a: 143, fig. 9.
[1673] Albertson 2000: 162.
[1674] Raja 2018: 14; Raja 2017: 115–122.

National Museum in Belgrade, it is clear that they represent significant testimonies about Palmyrene sepulchral art in the territory of the Roman Central Balkans, but also in the wider context, outside of the territory. The first funerary portrait represents the head of a young priest, presumably of the god Bel, which was, probably, originally attached to a figure reclining in a funerary banquet on the lid of a sarcophagus. Although the rest of the priest's body is missing, analogous to other known similar sculptures (for example, the already mentioned sculptural group from a sarcophagus lid from the Hypogeum of Yarhai or the sculptural group of the priest Barateh in the courtyard of the Palmyra Museum), it can be assumed that the priest was probably dressed in Parthian dress – a long sleeved tunic belted at the waist, worn over loose trousers decorated with bands of embroidery, with a cloak over them.[1675] He was probably presented with family members, with an inscription next to him, giving his name and, perhaps, a date. The head of a priest from the National Museum represents an exquisite example of Palmyrene funerary portraiture, quite rare because of the detail of the modius encircled with the laurel wreath with a central ornament in the shape of a miniature bust of a beardless young man in a himation and cloak. The significant position and wealth of this particular Palmyrene priest who is presented and his family, are additionally implied by his possible burial in a sarcophagus on whose lid the representation of the deceased was made. The second Palmyrene monument represents the priest Ammôn, possibly the priest of the god Bel's cult too, on a so-called loculus relief, the most common funerary type of Palmyrene sculpture. The priest Ammôn is depicted alone, as is most often the case with priestly representations on loculus reliefs and R. Raja suggests that the reason for this (contrary to the sarcophagi representations, where they are presented with family members), is not a religious one, but that it was done because a loculus relief marked a single grave within the context of a larger family tomb, while the sarcophagi lids with family scenes often represented a few generations of priests on one lid.[1676] Due to the fact that priestly depictions on loculi reliefs emphasised the status of the priest himself, unlike the sarcophagus representations, where the emphasis was on the family scene, R. Raja concludes that loculi reliefs, in some way, represented condensed family scenes per se.[1677]

After the analysis and interpretation of all three Palmyrene funerary sculptures, their undoubted Palmyrene origin is irrefutable – they are not the work of some local stonemason. In that context, the question of their presence in the central parts of the Balkans needs to be addressed. The migration of Syrians into the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans happened in several waves – the first wave was related to Trajan's conquest of Dacia, the second is attributed to the period of the Severan dynasty, while the last wave probably dates from the end of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 4th century.[1678] The suggested time for when all three Palmyrene funerary monuments were made are different. While the first monument is dated between 130-150 and the stele with the image of a girl between 140-170, the loculus relief with the representation of the priest Ammôn is dated from 230 to 250. There is no data that the monuments were constated together in the National Museum upon their first recording in the inventory books, therefore, they could have been found in different locations (although presumably in or near Belgrade Fortress) and in different time periods. A terminus ante quem (250) for the second funerary monument, the loculus relief of a priest, can be proposed as a period after which the monument could have been brought to Singidunum. It would agree with the proposed hypothesis that the monument could have been brought by soldiers of the Legion IV Flavia to Singidunum after Aurelian's campaign against the Palmyrene queen Zenobia, in 272, in which they fought.[1679] As for the other two funerary monuments, nothing more precise can be said at this moment.

[1675] Heyn 2008: 170, fig. 6–2.

[1676] Raja 2016: 141.
[1677] Ibid: 143.
[1678] Popović 1993: 75-76.
[1679] *IMS* I: 85, num. 72.

V Conclusion

After more than half a century since the first publication in which some of the Asia Minor and Syrian cults (Magna Mater's and Jupiter Dolichenus' cults) from the Roman provinces of Central Balkans were discussed,[1680] all so-far known epigraphic and archaeological material has been gathered, analysed and interpreted, which has enabled a broader and more precise insight into the existence of the mentioned cults, their diffusion and the particular characteristics that they had in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans. Their interpretation proved to be quite complex due to unpublished material from localities where epigraphic inscriptions with names of presumed Oriental origin would coincide with funerary rites and grave goods of also presumed Oriental origin. During the research for this study, as expected, some of the hypotheses presented in earlier scholarly literature about the problematics of a particular cult were affirmed, some assumptions were altered, while some presumptions were completely rejected. Also, so-far known epigraphic and archaeological material showed that almost all Asia Minor and Syrian cults known in other Roman provinces left their traces in the Central Balkans as well, with the exception of only a few cults not confirmed yet. The attested Oriental cults were favoured in central parts of the Balkans, mostly due to the official Roman ideology, the mobility of the army and Asia Minor and Syrian people of different professions on and through the mentioned territory, and private cult associations formed among Asia Minor and Syrian residents with the goal of venerating ancestral deities and preserving their national identity, but also due to a certain number of indigenous inhabitants who were receptive to the theologies and beliefs expressed in Asia Minor and Syrian religions. Certainly, in some cults, particularities can be noticed, like for example in the Metroac cult, where the cult of Magna Mater is completely absent from the western parts of the Central Balkans, contrary to the numerous funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image attested in the mentioned regions. In some cases, certain cults were suppressed by already more favoured cults, as was the case of Sol Invictus, who was never particularly favoured in the Danubian provinces as much as the already familiar and popular cult of the god Mithras. Any attempt to reconstruct not one but several different religions is somewhat difficult because one is left relying only on incomplete epigraphic and archaeological testimonies and, even then, their conclusions may be quite vague. Since my main goal in this study was to present all existing epigraphic and archaeological material associated with Asia Minor and Syrian cults from the Central Balkans territory and to try to analyse and interpret them as precisely as possible, in the wish that all the presumed aspects of the deities under which they were venerated were illuminated, I will continue with the main conclusions about the presence and life of those Oriental religions in the mentioned territory, leaving room for the inevitable and welcomed scholarly debate regarding my conclusions.

The cult of the goddess Magna Mater is attested with two epigraphic and ten archaeological monuments, and constated in the northern, eastern and southern parts of the territory. The absence of the cult in the western parts of the Central Balkans can be explained by the presence of numerous funerary monuments with *Attis tristis*' image, but also by a lack of archaeological research and published material in the territory. What can be observed from the mapping of the goddess' monuments is that her cult was known in larger urban centres, in Roman fortifications on the Danube Limes, but also in smaller areas in the south of the territory. The localisation of Magna Mater's monuments allows us to presume that, due to the official imperial ideology, the cult's attractive beliefs in rebirth and eternal life after death and the mobility of the goddess' adherents through the Central Balkans Roman provinces, the goddess' cult spread. Two main directions from which the Metroac cult could have come to the Central Balkans territory are possible – from Salona, through Dalmatia to the western parts of the territory and then further east, or from the south, from Asia Minor, through Greece and then Macedonia. Also, the cultural and artistic influences which came from Sirmium, where Magna Mater had a shrine or a temple and where her cult was venerated, should not be ignored.[1681] The role of the army in the spread of Magna Mater's cult is undisputable and proved by soldiers of the Legion VII Claudia stationed in Salona and Tilurium before their arrival in Viminacium. Whether it can be assumed that they were truly the main carriers or not of Magna Mater's cult, but also of other Asia Minor and Syrian cults in the Central Balkans, because they were most represented on the epigraphic material, is another

[1680] In her publication from 1966. year, 'Les cultes orientaux sur le territoire de la Mésie Supérieure', Lj. Zotović analysed and interpreted epigraphic and archaeological monuments of god Mithras, Jupiter Dolichenus, Magna Mater, Serapis and Isis and only one votive monument of god Sabazius from Timacum Minus (Ravna).

[1681] Mirković 1998: 93-97.

question for which I would not wish to rush to answer. The fact that we do not possess the required data regarding dedicant's professions and that we can only presume that, besides soldiers, individuals belonging to different social groups were also present among the goddess' devotees, does not mean that they really were not Magna Mater's adherents. The reasons for their absence from epigraphic monuments are many, but, presumably, chief among them are a lack of acceptance of the custom of revealing their beliefs and identity through epigraphic monuments and to be visible in that way in Roman society. Therefore, we can suppose that, as in other Roman provinces, the believers of Magna Mater in the Central Balkans belonged to different professions and different social classes, such as merchants, craftsmen, freedmen and slaves. The cult of the Phrygian goddess came to this territory as a completely formed cult in the 2nd century and, judging by the mostly canonical representations of the goddess, we can assume that she was respected primarily by Romanised residents and immigrants of Asia Minor origin – by the first group because the goddess was a part of Roman official ideology and, thus, by respecting her, Romanised inhabitants could more easily incorporat into the local community. From epigraphic material, which is scarce, it can be concluded that Magna Mater was venerated as an imperial deity, perhaps as the protectress of rivers and river trade, while archaeological material points to the goddess being worshipped as a chthonian deity and probably as an iatric deity, which would be implied by the fragmented statue of the goddess from Mediana near Niš' spa. The only presumed temple of the goddess is the so-called smaller temple in Felix Romuliana, with an assumed (in earlier literature) *fossa sanguinis* for the performing of the *taurobolium*. Another possible temple of the goddess could have existed in Viminacium, where her statue dedicated by the *nautarum quinquennalis* Gaius Valerius Vibianus, was situated. The dating of the epigraphic and archaeological monuments related to the cult of Magna Mater shows that her cult was present in the Central Balkans territory from the end of the 1st to the early 4th century, during almost the entire period of Antiquity.

The cult of the god Attis, Magna Mater's *paredros,* is confirmed only with archaeological material, in the shape of a bronze statue, which actually shows the genius of winter presented as the god Attis, appliqués in the shape of Attis' head, one terracotta and more than 50 funerary monuments with *Attis Tristis'* image. The mapping of Attis' funerary monuments shows that monuments in the form of cippi with an *Attis tristis* image were mostly grouped in the western parts of the Central Balkans and in Viminacium. The image of *Attis tristis* was favoured in western parts of the territory, in larger centres like Municipium Malvesatium or Municipium S, but also in smaller places like Ježevica, Karan, Otanj, etc. The figures of *Attis tristis*, presented in pairs on the lateral sides of funerary monuments, show the god's canonical image in most cases – as a standing, grieving youth, dressed in Oriental clothes and with a Phrygian hat, with his legs crossed, head leaning on one hand or the hand is holding a *pedum* (or torch in our cases), while the other hand is placed on his stomach. However, in some localities in the area of Visibabe, Otanj, Pljevlja and Komini, the attributes with which deity is presented vary – sometimes it is a torch instead of *pedum*, sometimes Attis is holding an oval object similar to a pine cone and in rare cases, he is holding his open palm beside his face. These variants can be explained by Attis' syncretism with the gods Mithras, Silvanus and Dionysus/Liber, but also by some unknown indigenous deity of a similar character. The fact that the god was presented as a shepherd also contributed to the favouring of his image among the rural, agricultural population in western parts of the Central Balkans. Inscriptions show that the deceased commemorated with funerary monuments with an *Attis tristis* image were of different professions and social class – mostly decurions and Romanised residents, but also those belonging to the upper class, such as, for example, a procurator of the Pannonian silver mines. Since the presence of the Roman army in western parts of the Central Balkans was not prominent (only cohorts I and II miliaria Delmatorum are attested and no military camp has been confirmed), all epigraphic and archaeological data points to the assumption that decurions, as the urban elite, were responsible for the spread of this iconographic type in the territory. The situation is different in Viminacium and its wider area, because the image of *Attis tristis* was probably brought by soldiers of the Legia VII Claudia, who were stationed in Tilirium and Salona, centres where the image of *Attis tristis* is attested, before being transferred to Viminacium, in the second half of the 1st century.

The aspects under which god Attis was venerated in the Central Balkans are primarily the chthonian aspect and that of a *psychopompos*, a guardian of the souls of the deceased, but also of a god of vegetation and fecundity (in smaller rural areas). The deity possessed a chthonian character not only in the cases of the bronze statue and terracotta from the Viminacium necropolis, but also, perhaps, in the cases of the appliqués in the shape of Attis' bust, which also imply the god's apotropaic dimension. As I mentioned, the images of *Attis tristis* with a turned downwards torch in his hand instead of a *pedum*, borrow the element of the torch from Mithras' iconography, whose cult was favoured in certain western parts of the Central Balkans where these images appear. It is possible that the attribute of the torch was introduced in the *Attis tristis'* images by the god's believers who wanted to make the image

more familiar and, thus, more favoured in the local communities. However, the fact that no monument of the god Attis is dated into the 4th century, as in the case of Magna Mater's cult (except the goddess' statue from Mediana, Niš), implies that, in the Central Balkans, the Metroac cult was already suppressed by Mithraism and Christianity at the end of the 3rd century.

The cult of the god Sabazius is mostly attested in the northern and southern part of the Central Balkans, which is not surprising considering that those areas were under a strong cultural influence from Thrace where the deity was, as a divinity of similar character to the god Dionysus, much favoured. Epigraphic monuments dedicated to Sabazius show that he was worshipped under the epithets *Augustus, Paternus* and *Κυρίως*. Two last epithets, Paternus and Κυρίως. indicate that the god was probably venerated by the dedicants of Thracian, Oriental or Greek origin as an ancestral god, but also as the master of the lives and destinies of his devotees. The epithet Κυρίως implies that, in Roman provinces of the Central Balkans, the deity's cult contained an emphasised Thracian element, expressed in the presence of Thracians who inhabited the territory, and in the indirect religious influence that came from Thrace. Iconographic presentations of Sabazius show his canonical image of a mature, bearded man, with the usual attributes of a pine cone, snake and an eagle, due to his close relationship to the god Zeus. The finds of ivory needles with heads in the shape of Sabazius' votive hand, of which two were discovered in graves, clearly indicate his apotropaic and eschatological aspect. The adherents of the god were soldiers, like the dedicant of the votive monument from Pirot Aurelios Mestrianos and the owner of the Tekija hoard. Sabazius' believers in the Central Balkans belonged to both sexes and different social classes as well, from soldiers and, presumably, merchants, craftsmen and freedmen, to wealthy residents of Late Antique villas.

One of the most favoured Asia Minor gods, not only in the territory of the Central Balkans, but also in other Roman provinces, Jupiter Dolichenus, is numerously attested with epigraphic and archaeological monuments and, probably, several presumed and three attested temples in the localities of Brza Palanka (Egeta), Čezava and Karataš (Diana). The monuments of the god were mostly found in military camps along the Danube Limes or their surroundings, with only three localities situated in the southern part of the Central Balkans territory. The role of the military in spreading Jupiter Dolichenus' cult in this territory is crucial, however, the significant number of the god's priests who spread the god's cult is also of the importance. The presence of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult in larger urban centres, like the capital of Moesia Superior, Viminacium, can, perhaps, also be attributed to the officers and soldiers of the Legion VII Claudia, who participated in a military campaign in Syria and could have brought the cult from there. As for other urban and Limes centres, I would agree with the conclusion of Anna Collar that already established existing network and the mobility of the officers who were in charge in those localities contributed to the spread of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult further, definitely after the beginning of the 3rd century, to which period the majority of the monuments is dated. On three of the epigraphic monuments, the epithet Dolichenus is written in its vulgar forms (Dolicenus, Dulcenus and Dolicinus), which can be attributed to indigenous residents who accepted the god's cult and became his devotees. Unlike in other Roman provinces, where epithets of the deity as Augustus, Paternus, Conservator, etc. are attested, in the Central Balkans territory, on only one monument is the god addressed as *κυριω*. Iconographic representations of Jupiter Dolichenus show a canonical image of the god as a mature, bearded man, without any particular variety of attributes except the usual ones (a thunderbolt and a double headed axe), presented alone or sometimes with his *paredra*, Juno Dolichena standing on the back of a hind. The analysis of epigraphic and archaeological monuments has shown that, in the Central Balkans, the god was worshipped as anywhere else in the Roman Empire – as a deity of battle and victory, military success and triumph. However, certain monuments imply his dimension of a protector of the Roman emperor and state, a guarantor of stability, but also as an iatric deity. Perhaps, Jupiter Dolichenus' celestial function can be presumed in certain monuments, as his role of the protector of mines and miners in the Central Balkan mining districts. The variety of his dedicants' professions imply that the god's cult attracted different social layers of Romans and indigenous residents, such as the governor of Moesia Superior's province, soldiers and cohorts, but, probably, also merchants, craftsmen and freedman, which is not, unfortunately epigraphically attested in so-far known monuments. As Jupiter Dolichenus' cult was so favoured in the Central Balkans, the number of his confirmed and presumed sanctuaries is also the largest, compared to other Asia Minor and Syrian deities. Three temples are epigraphically and archaeologically attested in the Danube Limes localities of Brza Palanka, Čezava and Karataš, while other sanctuaries can be presumed in the localities of Arčar, Jasen, Viminacium, Veliko Gradište, Ravna, Gračanica and Kumanovo. The *sacrarium* of *dolichenum*, discovered in archaeological excavations in the locality of Brza Palanka, was most probably located where the cult objects were found, with the possibility that some of the inventory (one of the marble statues and, perhaps, a few others), were brought from some other sanctuary of the god in the same or some other locality.[1682] However, no matter how favoured the cult of

[1682] Here I am alluding to two facts: in the sacrarium of Jupiter

the god was, judging by archaeological material that we have analysed, the latest monuments can be dated to the middle of the 3rd century, after which there are no epigraphic or archaeological confirmations of his cult.

The cult of another Asia Minor deity, Jupiter Turmasgades, is presumed to have existed in the locality of Viminacium, based on the find of a lost fragmented statuary representation of an eagle perched on a bull's head. Analogous iconographic representations from Dacia and Caesarea Maritima imply that the statue could have belonged to the corpus of Turmasgades' monuments, however, without any epigraphic confirmation it is impossible to be certain. The cult of Jupiter Turmasgades is known from less than a dozen monuments, of which the majority were dedicated by soldiers. However, because of the similar character to Jupiter Dolichenus and the god Mithras, it is presumed that the gods shared not only their mutual roles of deities of military battles and victories, but also their celestial and solar character. If Jupiter Turmasgades' cult existed in Viminacium, the god was probably venerated in a *dolichenum*, as is attested in several localities in the Roman Empire.

The cult of several local Asia Minor gods, Jupiter Melanus, Jupiter Cidiessus, Zeus Okkonènos, Zeus Synenos and Ζεύς Ἐζζαίος, were confirmed in mining districts of Moesia Superior, in the vicinity of the locality of Prizren, in Ulpiana and in the Kosmaj region. All deities were local Asia Minor gods, who represented ancestral gods for their dedicants, who settled in the Central Balkans and continued to worship the gods of their homeland. We can presume that, similar to other parts of the Central Balkans, the dedicants of those gods were gathered in private associations like *phratra* or *collegia*, with the purpose of venerating, sacrificing to and maintaining the cults of the mentioned deities, thus, preserving their own national identity in a foreign country. Since the gods were originally from Asia Minor districts rich in ores and stone quarries and they were worshipped in the Central Balkans mining areas, their role as protectors of mines and miners, but also stonemasons, can be assumed.

The cult of the Asia Minor god Mēn is somewhat complicated to interpret in Central Balkan territory, considering funerary monuments with the symbol of a crescent above the inscription field, from southern parts of the territory. However, two bronze statues of the god were found in Viminacium and Obrenovac. While the first statue of Mēn, found in Viminacium, presents the usual iconographic image of the deity, the other statue from Obrenovac represents a syncretistic image of Mēn-Somnus. Because of its clear chthonian symbolism, the statue of Mēn-Somnus could have been a grave good, while in the case of the Viminacium statue, nothing more precise can be supposed, except that it was probably a part of a private *lararium*. As for the funerary monuments with the symbol of a crescent from the southern parts of the Central Balkans, although J. Medini assumed that, besides them, funerary monuments with motifs of a pine cone, disc and rosette could also imply the presence of Mēn's cult, I believe that the god's influence can be presumed only in those funerary monuments with a symbol of a crescent and where onomastic data also supports that supposition. Since the cult of the god Mēn is scarcely attested in the neighbouring areas, it is probable that in the Central Balkans the deity was venerated by a small circle of devotees, of Asia Minor or Greek origin, who were settled or passing through central parts of the Balkans in the 2nd or the 3rd century.

A similar conclusion can be arrived at for the cult of the goddess Artemis of Ephesus, whose cult would have been completely unknown in the Central Balkans without two finds of gems and the lamp bearing the goddess' representation. Since there are no epigraphic confirmations of her cult and that only her summary image is shown on two gemstones and the lamp, it can be presumed that the cult of the Ephesian Artemis was almost unknown to the population who lived in the central parts of the Balkans, presumably because the goddess's cult was assimilated or suppressed by the cult of Magna Mater, as in some other Roman provinces. This hypothesis would be supported by the epigraphic monuments of the goddess, found south of the southern border of the Central Balkans, in the province of Macedonia (in the locality of Treskavec), where, under the name of Artemis of Ephesus, a local goddess of similar character to the Greek goddess Artemis was venerated. For the gem found in Viminacium, where the presence of a population of Asia Minor ethnicity is epigraphically and archaeologically attested, it can be assumed that its owner was of Asia Minor or Greek origin. The two gemstones and the lamp imply aspects of the Ephesian Artemis as a chthonian and celestial deity. Additionally, because of the presence of the torches in the gem from Viminacium, the goddess' eschatological and soteriological dimensions can be also presumed. Therefore, both gems were, perhaps, grave goods (the lamp certainly was) that secured the goddess' protection for the deceased and her promise of rebirth and eternal life.

The corpus of epigraphic and archaeological monuments dedicated to Sol Invictus show that, like the gods Mithras and Jupiter Dolichenus, the deity

Dolichenus in Brza Palanka, in the middle of the room, a stone block was found which could have served as a base for putting a relief of the god for his devotees to see. However, some of the finds, like one of the marble statues, had on its backside traces of mortar, which allows us to presume that the statue stood somewhere else and that its original place wasn't the *sacrarium* (perhaps some other sanctuary of god in Brza Palanka or some other locality).

was favoured by the inhabitants of the Central Balkans Roman provinces. The mapping of the monuments dedicated to Sol Invictus points to the localisation of the god's monuments in the northern, central and southern parts of the territory, while, unfortunately, any hypothesis about the localisation of the majority of the god's cult objects, 14 gemstones, is impossible to make, due to their unknown provenience. The epigraphic monuments, like statuary presentations of the god Sol, are local works of mediocre quality, unlike the finds of gems on which different iconographic types of Sol Invictus' image are shown. In that context, to a very rare type of iconographic representations belongs the gem with the image of Sol riding a horse, but also the gem with a syncretistic presentation of Sol-Serapis. The epigraphic and archaeological monuments of Sol Invictus show that, in the Central Balkans, the deity was worshipped as a god of victory and peace, as an all mighty god who protected his devotees. The support of the god's cult, mirrored in the official ideologies of emperors Aurelian and Constantine the Great, had a significant influence in the context of its favouring in the central parts of the Balkans. Whether the god was venerated under some other aspects as well in the territory might be assumed by the gemstone from Guberevac, which implies Sol Invictus' celestial, soteriological and eschatological character. Also, the position of *ad locutio* of the god's hand, which is known from Central Balkan finds, suggests the promotion of his protection towards his adherents, and the prosperity and peace that the deity promised. The turbulent 3rd century was certainly a fertile period for such messages, not only for residents of Oriental, but also for those of indigenous and Roman origin, both within the Central Balkans' frontiers and beyond them.

The cult of Dea Syria is attested with a votive monument found in the vicinity of Skoplje and, presumably, on another votive monument found in the same area (in Skoplje Fortress). The goddess' cult is indirectly attested with a funerary monument found in the Danube Limes locality of Glamija, which represents a rare confirmation of the priest of Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria dedicating to both deities. The votive monument from Dolni Nerezi, in the vicinity of Skoplje, contains a dedication to Dea Syria made because of a commemoration of her new temple. Although no architectural remains of the goddess' temple have been discovered in the vicinity of Skoplje so-far, this monument undoubtedly attests its existence at the end of the 1st century. The other presumed epigraphic monument would be dedicated to Dea Syria Sanctissima, whose epithet *sanctissima* would, here, be unique in the territory of the whole Roman Empire. It can be presumed that the circle of Dea Syria's adherents in Central Balkans was quite small and, perhaps, comprised a private association of Syrian immigrants, who continued to worship the cult of their homeland goddess in the new environment. As Dea Syria was worshipped as a Mother Goddess, mistress over the destinies of her devotees, the one who carefully listens to the prayers of her devotees, but also as a lunar and celestial goddess, we can only presume that she held the same values for her worshippers in the Central Balkans.

The cult of Theos Hypsistos is, presumably, attested in a votive monument from Pirot, a locality in the boundary zone between Moesia Superior and Thrace. Since the inscription is damaged on the crucial line, its restoration has been interpreted variously in scholarly literature – as a dedication to the god Sabazius under the name of Theos Hypsistos and as a dedication to Theos Hypsistos. Since the absence of a crucial argument makes it is impossible to say which hypothesis of mentioned two is the right one, I will just refer to the fact that the cult of the god Theos Hypsistos is epigraphically and archaeologically attested numerous times in the province of Thrace, as is Sabazius' cult. Theos Hypsistos was venerated as the protector of his devotees and a celestial deity, so if the monument from Pirot is dedicated to him, we can presume that he was worshipped under the mentioned aspects. What makes the votive monument from Pirot very important is the attestation of the existence of a *thiasos*, a private cultic association led by a priest and patron, who probably shared some of the religious obligations in the context of the ritual practices, organisation of sacrifices and ritual banquets. The text of the inscription confirms that they also had roles of mediators between the god and his dedicants, because the vow is made through them. The names of the *thiasos*' members are legible in the inscription, allowing us to conclude that the *thiasos* encompassed only male members, with names that imply their Greek, Roman or Oriental origin, probably dedicating the monument to the god in the 2nd or early 3rd century.

After reviewing the most important conclusions about Asia Minor and Syrian religious testimonies in the territory of the Central Balkans Roman provinces, certain conclusions about their presence and existence in the territory can be offered. The religions from Asia Minor and Syria represented different conceptions of religious thinking, feeling and believing than those contained in traditional Roman cults. Although scholarly works from the 19th and part of the 20th century present them as shocking and decadent, primarily because of the ritual rites in some of the cults that were performed in honour of the deities, later scholars were aware that these religions belonged to civilisations much older than the Roman civilisation, which evolved within their own cultural and civilisational framework and, thus, came into contact

with the Roman world. The fact that cults such as those of the Metroac, Sabazius, the god Mēn and Artemis of Ephesus were part of the so-called mystery religions, containing a doctrine related to a privileged relationship with the god or goddess in question, through whom the devotees would be granted purification of their souls from all sins, rebirth into a new life and religion and immortal life after death, was of crucial significance for the successful implementation of these particular religions all over the Roman Empire.[1683] Mystery religions were more inclined towards the significance of the individual and his/her life, making the relationship between the devotee and the divinity intimate and giving precedence to spiritual life and emotions over material life and worldly pleasures.[1684] One of the more frequently used epithets for Asia Minor deities was, as we have seen, *ἐπήκος*, which meant that they were *dii praesentes* – always there for their adherents, to listen to them and help them. Containing initiation ceremonies and representing cults in which one's incorporation and participation depended upon rites performed on the initiate or by the initiate (like fasting, sacrifice and purification before the initiation, and a ritual banquet after the initiation), elements such as secrecy, privileged knowledge of the ritual practices and outspoken formulas (*symbola*), mutually differed one mystery religion from another, however, with one common goal of the hope for a joyous Afterlife existence in the realm of the gods.[1685] As it can be seen from the experience of Lucius, Apuleius' hero in Metamorphoses, through initiation, initiate approached the gods, experienced very intensive and emotional union with them and became a part of a religious community of mystery religions.[1686] The influence of mystery religions on one's ethics, but also the very emotional and intimate participation in initiation rituals that simulated an initiate's death and rebirth into a new, immortal life,[1687] made them attractive to their initiates and worshippers, who had gone through the initiation and, as Apuleius describes, carefully preserved certain emblems (*signa*) presented to them by priests, later venerating the deity in silence, out of the reach of all who had not been initiated.[1688] Initiates to the mysteries recognised each other by particular *symbola* or *signa.* Firmicus Maternus knew little about this, but, nevertheless, he writes that 'those signs (*signa*) and symbols (*symbola*) by which the mass of wretched humans recognise each other in their superstitions. For they have a particular sign (*signa*) and a particular response in which instruction of the devil is transmitted to them in the meetings of these very sacriliges'.[1689] Divinities who went through suffering and, thus, deserved immortal life, were perfect models for the devotees who, with their individual successes or suffering, would triumph over death and join the company of the gods.[1690] However, in Roman society, those same deities also aroused strong emotions – from fear, admiration and enthusiasm to contempt and abhorrence.[1691] The character of a particular Asia Minor and Syrian god was partly responsible for the successful or not so successful implementation of these religions in the Roman provinces. Other elements were also significant, such as the Roman State's official recognition of the religion in question (as in the case of the Metroac cult), the religion's significance in the eyes of its devotees, who were more or less in a position to promote the religion in question (as in the case of Jupiter Dolichenus' cult), the prevailing official ideology of a particular Roman emperor, etc. What is important to remember is that no religion can be interpreted without taking into full account the particular local context in which it was spread and

[1683] Godwyn 1981; Burkert 1987; Alvar 2008; Bremmer 2014; Waldner 2013: 215-242. Sacred tale or *hieros logos* of particular mystery religion could have been developed based on a myth, nature allegory and metaphysics. Nevertheless, books were used in mystery religions from early on, like books of prophecy, prayer books and advices for performing sacrifices, Burkert 1987: 70-72. The significance of ritual hymns sang during the holy processions and ritual practices is also not to be ignored, because as N. Belayche showed, the hymns were particular ritual forms which emphasised the significance of particular divinity in question, but they could also glorify Roman emperor and imperial house or highlight the status of a person who financed the ceremonies, Belayche 2013b: 17-41.

[1684] Different ancient writers described the experience of initiation in mysteries, like Plutarch, who writes that the initiate's soul suffers frightening paths in darkness and its panic and shivering, which are ceased by the wonderful light and beautiful meadows which greet the initiated into the new life. Or Plato, who describes in his work *Phaedrus* soul's journey in a chariot to the sky, up to the highest summit to rejoice in the eternal life which is enabled to adherents of mystery gods, through the ritus of initiation, Burkert 1987: 91-93; Waldner 2013; Bremmer 2014: 13-16.

[1685] As W. Burkert defines, the initiation ritual was actually the performing of death and rebirth that is of voluntary 'death' of an initiate in this life and his rebirth in a new life in a new religion, which is indicated by the terms *natus* and *renatus* on taurobolium inscriptions for the initiated who was born again on the day of the initiation. In some mystery cults, like Sabazius', sexual symbolism in the ritual of initiation can be observed (a golden snake which was made to pass beneath the initiate's clothes during the initiation which symbolizes a sexual union with the god) or falling into ecstasy before the very initiation (like *galli* in Metroac cult), Burkert 1987: 99-113;

[1686] 'I reached the very gates of death and, treading Proserpine's threshold, yet passed through all the elements and returned. I have seen the sun at midnight shining brightly. I have entered the presence of the gods below and the presence of the gods above, and I have paid due reverence before them', Apuleius, *Metamorphoses,* X. 20-23.

[1687] The simulation of initiate's death could be implied by Firmicus Maternus' word *moriturus* with which he calls the initiate – one who is about to die, but also by Sallustius who states that 'initiates are fed on milk as though being reborn', Alvar 2008: 276-277.

[1688] Apuleius was accused of sorcery and in his Defense (*Apologia*), he offers different accounts about ancient magic, but also about mystery rituals in the 2nd century, Apuleius, *Apologia*, 55. The *signa* which he mentions were actually vocal passwords given to the initiated by the priests, used for recognition.

[1689] The symbols (*symbola*) were in the opinion of G. E. Mylonas a credo of a particular religion, a confession of faith and proof that rituals have been completed, Mylonas 1961: 295; Oster 1971: xi. J. Alvar mentions that words *orgion* and *orgia* could be used to designate sacred objects viewed at the moment of initiation ritual and as synonyms for *symbola* used as physical proofs and not passwords, Alvar 2008: 216.

[1690] Ibid: 133.

[1691] See Beard 2012.

developed further, and the Central Balkans territory, with all its particular characteristics at the time of the implementation of each Asia Minor and Syrian cult and religion, is something that must be very seriously, and from all possible angles, considered.

The role of the Roman State was important, when considering the cult of Magna Mater and Attis, because the Romanised indigenous residents, particularly after declaring *Constituio Antoniniana* in 212, searched for the best ways to integrate into the Roman society. In his analysis and interpretation of the epigraphic and archaeological testimonies of Orientals in the Central Balkans in Antiquity, V. Mihajlović concluded that from all epigraphic monuments in Moesia Superior, approximately one tenth can be connected with immigrants of Oriental origin during the whole period of Antiquity, who mainly resided in Singidunum, Viminacium, Timacum Minus, Naissus and Scupi.[1692] Approximately one half of the monuments can be dated to two periods: from the late 1st to the early 2nd century and from the second half of the 2nd century to the middle of the 3rd century, which coincides with the situation in other parts of the Roman Empire. One half of all monuments cannot be dated, which narrows our possibilities for a more precise insight into the distribution and presence of Orientals in the Central Balkans territory. Of all the dedicants, only one fifth of them are women (most of Asia Minor origin with only one woman of Syrian origin) and over 30 years old. Asia Minor and Syrian individuals were mostly Roman citizens, freedmen and slaves.[1693] Considering their professions, epigraphic monuments show that they were mostly soldiers of legions, soldiers of auxiliary units, soldiers (generally), decurions, miners, traders and priests. Therefore, the situation with the army being the most visible element in the epigraphic material is again attested, which does not mean that residents of Asia Minor and Syrian origin who were not soldiers did not exist - they are just not visible. However, as we can see, the percentage of persons of Oriental origin was not so significant that we can presume that they were the main carriers of the Asia Minor and Syrian cults in the Central Balkans. Another reason for their 'invisibility' in epigraphic monuments is also because they are mostly presented as individuals. Nevertheless, what can be assumed and what coincides with epigraphic material from the Central Balkans localities is the important role of the army in the diffusion and promotion of certain cults, implied by the discovery of monuments mainly in larger urban centres like Ratiaria, Singidunum, Viminacium, Naissus and Scupi or in Danube Limes localities. Beside the army, the presence of merchants and their significant role in the diffusion of the cults should be presumed, as of priests who are epigraphically attested. The presence of individuals and associations of Asia Minor and Syrian origin was constated in mentioned centres as well, but for many of them it cannot be presumed whether or not they were in military service. The Asia Minor population, mostly Phrygians and Bythinians and Syrian immigrants are attested in mining districts in Kosmaj and the territory of the province of Dardania (in the vicinity of Prizren, Ulpiana and Municipium Dardanorum-Sočanica), but also in those localities situated on important crossroads (the western parts of the Central Balkans), where, due to the mobility of travellers and inhabitants, the presence of different ethnicities was confirmed. Residents of Oriental origin are also attested in Scupi, where cult objects such as a lamp with Phrygian bust and a ring with an amber stone bearing the motif of Phrygian head were discovered in graves in the Scupi necropolis.[1694] The presence of *Attis tristis'* image on funerary monuments of decurions from different *municipii* attested in the western parts of the Central Balkans confirmed their role as those whose influence contributed to the spread of the image. Decurions had an important role in official religious matters and were actively involved in the organisation of ceremonial processions, festivities, games, sacrifices and banquets in other divinities' cults. The favouring of the *Attis tristis* image in smaller regions can be explained by the opinions offered in earlier scholarly literature that 'certain cults were more acceptable for the indigenous population', which, in our opinion is attested with archaeological monuments from particular western localities of the Central Balkans like Ježevica, Požega, Užice, Karan, etc., where a mostly agricultural population lived. Their acceptance of the *Attis tristis* image can most probably be explained by the familiarity of the image's appearance with a shepherd's staff. Thus, as a shepherd, the image was identified with the shepherd's image of the gods Silvanus and Dionysus/Liber, whose cults are epigraphically attested in the mentioned places and who were favoured as protectors of agriculture, fields and woods. In the western parts of the Central Balkans, the Romanisation of the territory can be followed from the second half of the 2nd century (areas of the presumed Municipium M(alvesatium) and the locality of Kolovrat). From, or after, the period of Trajan's reign,[1695] one part of Delmatae was displaced from the hinterland of Salona to the regions of Prijepolje and Komini, Pljevlja (the area of the presumed Municipium S), thus, populating the rural areas where a work force was needed for agricultural

[1692] With funerary monuments being more than twice numerous than the votive ones, Михајловић 2009: 56-57.

[1693] Of 103 individuals whose Oriental origin of the dedicant can be presumed, 45,67 % were Roman citizens, the rest were peregrini, freedmen and slaves, Ibid: 62.

[1694] Микулчић 1975: 97, num. 10, num. 137.

[1695] A. Alföldi suggests that the first wave of the transfer of Delmatae to the region of Prijepolje and Komini, Pljevlja, happened in the period of Claudius reign, when a large part of indigenous inhabitants from the background of Salona had to be displaced because their land was given to the veterans, Лома 2002: 18.

and mining works. The already Romanised population of the Delmatae assimilated with the indigenous residents of Illyrian, Celtic, Thracian and Dacian origin, leaving traces of their existence and peculiar culture in epigraphic and archaeological material discovered in the area. The Delmatae, who moved in several waves to the areas of Prijepolje and Pljevlja, were organised as autonomous tribal communities under the command of the indigene praefectus Pladomenus Carvanius, who kept his indigene name after he acquired his Roman citizenship.[1696] This short digression represents one example that could explain the attested syncretism of different motifs in the iconography of the *Attis tristis* image in the different areas that it appears in funerary monuments.

Archaeological and epigraphic monuments, with their varieties in the motifs and represented scenes, allow us to presume that certain cults had different connotations for the residents of particular areas In the *municipii*, the symbolism of the god Attis was probably known only to the members of the upper class (decurions), who were in contact with larger centres like Salona or Sirmium, where the Metroac cult was well known and favoured, which would be attested with the tendencies towards the philosophical teachings of Neoplatonism, oriented in the direction of the individuality of members of the educated elite.[1697] In smaller, rural centres, the population probably did not possess any deeper knowledge or even any knowledge at all about the symbolism of the god Attis, yet it favoured the motif equating it with the deities or motifs which were known to them and which were well liked. Although the doctrines of certain cults, like the Metroac or Sabazius', contained ideas about the salvation of the soul and its continuance through immortal life, the philosophical teachings of the 2nd and the 3rd century also contained similar ideas. Those initiated into the mystery religions believed that they could attain immortality due to their initiation and particular rites performed during the process, thus, uniting with the deity in question. As J. Alvar observes in his study about three mystery cults of Isis, Magna Mater and Mithras, that in the earlier scholarly literature 'death and immortality were interpreted as symbols of the annual regeneration of Nature, which was understood to be the central focus of these religions'. In contemporary scholarly literature this opinion is not much altered, since the mythical cycle of Nature (death in winter and resurrection in spring) is a subject of the divine order.[1698] However, the promise of salvation and eternal life after death given to the initiated into mystery religions is only a promise – there is no evidence or reassurance of rebirth and eternal bliss, thus, it is just a calming of the existential anxieties known to every mortal, being mirrored in the blissful image of resurrection also contained in Christian beliefs.[1699]

How much or little did these teachings and beliefs reach the conscience of ordinary people in the Central Balkans Roman provinces? Based on the epigraphic and archaeological evidence, I believe that, considering the unequal degree of Romanisation of the inhabitants of different parts of the territory and the attested level of conservatism in rural areas and smaller centres, only the city elite, which consisted of Romans and Romanised indigenous residents and clergy, could have been and probably were more deeply knowledgeable of the cults' theologies. Even then, some important questions remain unanswerable, like whether devotees really believed in the promised blissful Afterlife, like the parents of Quintus Aeronius Firminus from Salona believed, or were they crushed by the deaths of their loved ones, like the parents of the deceased seven year old Antonios who, although initiated into the cults of several deities (Bona Dea, Dionysus, Hermes Hegemonios and Magna Mater) died, thus, sadly confirming that even the mysteries were powerless in the face of death.[1700] In some cases, the official state ideology was a leading force in the promotion of certain cult, as was the case with Severan emperors and the cults of Magna Mater and Jupiter Dolichenus or Constintine the Great and god Sol. As in any other part of the Roman Empire, the upper class of the indigenous population, along with soldiers, tried to adapt to the current trends, while the majority of the indigenous population tried to adapt the particular cult to their beliefs and traditions. In that way, certain iconographic contaminations on particular cult monuments can be explained – like the visible genitals and beard in the Attis figure from the locality of Komini or the satyr's foot on a ram's head

[1696] Ibid: 21, num. 1.
[1697] Waldner 2013: 38.
[1698] Alvar 2008: 34, 113.

[1699] Much has been written in scholarly literature about the similarities between mystery religions' and Christian' ritual calendar, related to the seasons, baptism equivalent to the initiation into the mysteries and pagan ritual banquet equivalent to the communion. Different scholars suggested Christian borrowing of mystery rituals and practices, thus arousing numerous controversies which have little to do with epigraphical, archaeological and historical testimonies which constate parallel development of mystery religions and Christianity, Ibid: 408-417.

[1700] Already mentioned funerary monument from Salona of Quintus Aeronius Firminus, where beautiful verses citing *corpus habent cineres animam sacer abstulit aer,* confirm the belief into the continuance of deceased's life in the heavenly realm of gods, Medini 1981: 527-528, num. 58. The funerary monument from Rome dated to the 3rd century is erected for a seven year old boy who, as the inscription's text says, performed all the rites with great care, but still died and thus other initiates should forget about the sacred mysteries, because nobody can prolong one's life (the deceased boy Antonios was a priest of 'all the gods: first of Bona Dea, then of the Mother of the Gods and of Dionysus Kathegemon. For them I performed the mysteries always in august fashion. Now I have left the august sweet light of Helios. Therefore you, *mystai* or friends of whatever kind of life, forget all the august mysteries of life, one after the other, for nobody can dissolve the thread spun by the Fates. For I, Antonios the august (only) lived seven years and twelve days'), Burkert 1987: 28-29; Sfameni Gasparro 1985: 95.

in the marble composition of a Drunken Dionysus with a satyr from Mediana. Nevertheless, it is certain that, as in any other Roman province, in the Central Balkans' larger urban centres, the *Feriale urbanum* of the settlement existed and all important festivities, like *dies natalis imperatoris*, festivities in honour of the Capitoline triad, commemorations of new sanctuaries, sacrifices, and imperial and military triumphs were celebrated accordingly. Provincial priests and the indigenous religion had little or no influence within that framework.

In my opinion, the favouring of Asia Minor and Syrian deities in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans, had its foundations in the army, merchants and the Romanised indigenous elite and only after them, in the relatively limited number of immigrants of Asia Minor (primarily Phrygians and Bithynians), Syrian and Greek origin, who settled, were employed or passed through the territory. Their presence, connected to their commercial and other economic skills (like mining and stonemasonry), allowed them to acquire higher positions in local society in the 3rd century, as in other Roman provinces.[1701] Their organisation in private associations (*thiasos* from Pirot, Cilices in Singidunum, immigrants from *κώμη Χαιρουμουτα*, *κώμη Σιγῶν* and Abdarmisu in Commagenian Germaniceia in Viminacium), preserved not only their respect and devotion towards their ancestral deities, but also their national identity. Members of private associations who were of better financial standing could finance the religious and social activities of the association through their donations, gifts, membership fees, etc., and a certain hierarchy existed among members, as can be seen from the inscription on a Pirot monument, where members of the *thiasos* were named as a priest, patron *(prostates*) and, probably, a secretary, treasurer, temple curator and other personnel who took care of different religious and administrative tasks. A similar organisation is attested in approximately same period (between the end of the 2nd and the middle of the 3rd century) in the already mentioned inscriptions from the *dolichenum* on Aventine, displaying the titles and names of Jupiter Dolichenus *patroni* and *candidati*.

The majority of the ordinary indigenous population was not well acquainted with Asia Minor and Syrian religions and relied on the general symbolism of a certain deity and its iconography, rather than on any real knowledge of a particular cult's theology or beliefs. The territory of the Central Balkans was one where different cultural and religious influences blended during Antiquity, which, with the addition of the pre-Roman legacy of different indigenous cultures, resulted in a complex picture of some Asia Minor religions in which traits of local religious identities appear. The Oriental religious influences present along the Danube, together with cultural and religious influences coming from the north (Salona and Sirmium), east (Thrace) and south (Greece and Macedonia), merged in the central parts of the Balkans with indigenous traditional religions and beliefs and is reflected in the epigraphic and archaeological material which is so-far known. From material testimonies, it is clear that the urban elite in larger centres (*municipii* and *coloniae*) was the main carrier of the Romanisation in the territory, consisting of Italics and the Romanised indigene aristocracy in the first centuries. From the 2nd century, middle class social groups started to appear, while in the 3rd century, individuals who belonged to the Romanised indigenous population became most visible on epigraphic monuments dedicated to Oriental deities. This is also a period when euergetism culminated, when the local population was incorporating more intensively into the city's elite and when Roman emperors toured the area.[1702] However, the low number of euergetic inscriptions constated in the Central Balkan territory, where writing was not widespread in the pre-Roman period, can be explained by the absence of a custom to erect honorary monuments in honour of a benefactor. There were not many benefactors among the indigenous population and they, as archaeological and epigraphic monuments show, chose other ways to display their status and wealth, such as by building lavish houses and monumental funerary monuments and tombs. Only in rare cases, like, for example, in the case of Lucius Marius Perpetuus, whose rich career, among other duties, included being *Legatus Augusti pro praetor* in Moesia Superior between 211 and 214, do we have a closer insight into the honouring of the imperial family and dedication to one of the most favoured military gods in the Danube Limes in its sanctuary in Karataš, Jupiter Dolichenus. The role of immigrants in the Central Balkan mining districts and local communities is also significant – the penetration of Italics into mining areas can be followed through epigraphic monuments and characteristic toponyms.[1703] From the period of Augustus, the contact of Romans with indigenous populations in the context of mines and mining began, continuing with the arrival of immigrants of Oriental origin who worked in mines and settled in their vicinity. From the 2nd century, they began to appear in more important roles involved with supervisory and administrative tasks in the mines, thus strengthening their social positions as well. Besides military and other categories of worshippers of Asia Minor and Syrian cults, a number of dedications were erected by individuals whose profession and social status are unknown to us.

[1701] The presence of Asia Minor and Syrian immigrants in connection with ore mines and stone quarries is attested in Noricum (Feldkirchen) and several already mentioned localities in Dacia, like Sancrai near Aque, Albinus Maior, Bejan (near Teliucu), Apulum, Valea Săngeorgiului etc., Szabó 2018: 166-167.

[1702] Mladenović 2012: 33.

[1703] Душанић 2006: 98-99.

I believe that at least a portion of those dedications, if not more, presented an expression of the personal and intimate beliefs in a particular god or goddess to whom a devotee appealed for the protection and patronage and whose cults aroused strong personal feelings, as is simply expressed in a dedication from 374 by Clodius Hermogenianus Caesarius, that Magna Mater and Attis were the 'guardians of his mind and soul'.[1704]

Each Asia Minor and Syrian cult lasted for a specific period of time, which is, in some cases, not difficult to define (as in the case of Magna Mater or Sol Invictus), while in some cases, like for the cult of Dea Syria, the period of its presence in the Central Balkans remains a mystery. Hopefully, new archaeological research in the future will shed light on this.

The attacks by Christian writers on the ritual practices and idolatry of Asia Minor and Syrian cults and the laws that prohibited pagan cults and associations went hand in hand with the strengthening of Christianity and, as has already mentioned, the last breaths of paganism and, thus, Oriental religions as well, were linked to the senatorial pagan revival in the 4th century.[1705] From the 2nd century, attacks against cult images can be found in Christian writings, directed towards their underestimation and repudiation – Arthenagoras cannot accept cult images as gods, because he knows that men are their makers, while Minucius Felix states that whatever the cult images are made of (stone, wood, silver), they are not gods but they are pronounced to be gods on the basis of a man's will.[1706] Although certain scholars suggest that in the period of Late Antiquity, pagan sculptures and imagery had no religious dimension, but were purely decorative, the fate of many cult sculptures, statues, mosaics and other cult monuments that were damaged or destroyed, imply the contrary – they still held a strong religious meaning and, thus, represented a threat to the new, budding religion of Christianity.[1707] Asia Minor and Syrian cult monuments were not spared destruction and shared the fate of other pagan cult objects, this particularly referred to the mystery religions which contained the same doctrine as Christianity – their deities were deities who, like Christ, died and rose after death. In the Central Balkans territory, this occurrence can be observed on mutilated images of *Attis tristis* and crosses carved on pagan monuments, but also on the cult monuments of other Asia Minor and Syrian deities, for example Jupiter Dolichenus, who did not belong to the mystery religions. The Christian custom of marking pagan statues with crosses is attested in the middle of the 4th century by Julian, who mentions Christian cross-marking in one of his letters after his visit to the heroon of Hector, in Troy.[1708] The usual mutilation of pagan images consisted of erasing the faces and damaging parts of the bodies, as in the case of the statue of a sleeping Ariadne from Felix Romuliana.[1709] It also included the decapitation of sculptures and statues, as in the case of the statues representing different divinities from Mediana in Niš.[1710] Of course, images of some deities, such as Minerva, Victory or Tyche, still had political significance and, therefore, were present in urban centres because of their relationship with state authority or they just adorned public spaces.[1711] The power of cult images was still strong in the sunset of Antiquity and by damaging or destroying some of them, Christians believed that they were annulling their existence and influence.[1712] However, as more recently suggested in scholarly literature, the cross-markings on pagan cult monuments, most notably in Ephesus' basilica group portraits of Augustus and Livia, where crosses were carved on their foreheads, could have been made not only out of Christian fear of a demonic presence inside pagan monuments and their efforts to purify them, but also because of their

[1704] '*Diis animae suae mentisque custodibus aram dicavit*', *CIL* VI, 499. Dedication by senator Clodius Hermogenianus Caesarius found on a votive altar from the Phrygianum dated to the 19th July 374, *CCCA* 3: 50, num. 228.

[1705] Still, there are no evidence that attest Christian attacks on pagan temples and images before the end of the 3rd century, Kristensen 2013: 66.

[1706] Ibid: 67.

[1707] Stirling 2005.

[1708] Julian's account on the cross-marking of pagan statues by Christians is given in one of his letters written after his visit to a heroon of Hector at Troy by a local bishop. Julian states that all the statues in heroon were preserved and without 'the sign of the impious on their foreheads', which in his opinion Christians make to drive away demons from pagan images, Kristensen 2012: 36.

[1709] During the archaeological excavations in 1993.year in the area of Roman baths in Felix Romuliana, a part of a white marble sculpture of sleeping Ariadne was found. In the same area, four years later, three more sculptural parts of the same composition were found, also as the first fragment used as *spoliae* built into a 6th century structure. The skilfully modelled sculpture of Ariadne shows Dionysus' consort as a sleeping young girl, lying on a couch and nude to the waist, with a cloth covering the lower part of her body. Judging by the elegant classicism of the statue's stylistic characteristics, it can be dated to the second half of the 3rd century. Her face and breasts are chipped away deliberately, probably in the period of the Late Antiquity, Лаловић 2001: 239-243.

[1710] The group of mythological marble sculptures found in one of the western cubicula of Constantine's villa with peristyle at Mediana in Niš, encompasses different divinities and half-divinities, like Asclepius, Hygieia, Artemis, Hercules and Dionysus, who were all decapitated. It is presumed that the statues which adorned Constantine's villa at Mediana, were hidden away before some danger, probably barbarian attacks in the 4th century, Vasić, Milošević, Gavrilović Vitas, Crnoglavac 2016.

[1711] As L. Stirling and T. M. Kristensen point out, some cities continued to decorate their public and private spaces (like baths, city gates, etc.) with antique statuary in the 5th century, with a decline of active appreciation towards the middle of the century when slow ceasing of statuary production is also attested, Stirling, Kristensen 2016: 18-19.

[1712] Different reasons were behind Christians' mutilation, destruction and destroying of pagan monuments, some of the main ones being the construction of Christian hegemony, conversion of pagans to Christians (who then destroyed their own idols), the destruction of pagan temples and statues in advance of church foundation, the destruction of pagan images as part of rituals of exorcism (destroying the demons hidden in the sacred images of pagan deities) and the destruction of pagan monuments as one way of achieving Christian martyrdom, Kristensen 2013: 85-89.

intent to, perhaps, re-use them, after their purification or just save them as valuable antique monuments.[1713] The last mentioned is mirrored in Prudentius' poem *Contra Symmachum,* who advises leaving aside childish festivals, absurd ceremonies and offerings to gods and advocates for preserving of the statues 'the works of great artists, country's fairest ornaments'.[1714]

Nonetheless, no matter what degree of mutilation or destruction pagan monuments endured, their religious dimension lived on in the Central Balkans, Christian churches were frequently founded in or near the location of pagan temples and frequently, cult and funerary monuments were saved because of their use as *spolia*, building material for religious structures, fortifications and necropolises in later periods. As with other pagan cults, the ideas and beliefs contained in the theology of particular Asia Minor or Syrian religions continued to exist in the central parts of the Balkans, as in other parts of former Roman Empire, not only in the shape of the numerous *loci sacri* constated in or near temples of certain pagan deities, but also in Christian doctrine, which, like the mystery religions, proclaimed a hope for new birth and the immortal life of its believers, who would be *renatus in aeternum.*

[1713] T. M. Kristensen discusses the meaning of cross-marking on pagan statues by arguing that crude crosses on statues' foreheads (he takes the example of three imperial portraits from Ephesus) were not symbols of Christian triumph or iconophobia, but implications of purification and baptism of the pagan images. The author pays attention to the appearance of cross-marking made on other body parts and illustrates it with the examples of statuettes like Hercules from Tralles in Asia Minor and a life-size statue of Artemis from Corinth, on which crosses are carved in their torso (Hercules) and thigh (Artemis). The crosses were used to purify not only images but spaces as well (like in the case of Mithraeum at Doliche where the cross was put above the cult images) and could represent the sign that pagan image was baptized and thus its re-use in Christian context. This would be implicated by the finds of cross-marked statues in or near Christian churches, Kristensen 2012: 31-66 (with a catalogue of cross-marked pagan statues).

[1714] 'I would have thee now lay aside thy childish festivals, thy absurd ceremonies, thy offerings which are unworthy of a realm so great. Wash ye the marbles that are bespattered and stained with putrid blood, ye nobles. Let your statues, the works of great artists, be allowed to rest clean; be these our country's fairest ornaments, and let no debased usage pollute the monuments of art and turn it into sin', Thomson 1949: 389.

VI Bibliography

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AE *L'anée épigraphique,* Paris 1888-
AJA *American Journal of Archaeology,* Boston
AI *Archaeologia Iugoslavica,* Beograd
AMN *Acta Musei Napocensis,* Cluj-Napoca
ANRW *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt,* edd. H. Temporini & W. Haase, Berlin 1972-
AV *Arheološki vestnik,* Ljubljana
BAA *Bulletin de l'Université de Haute Alsace,* Mulhouse
BASOR *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research,* New Haven, Conn.
BIBR *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome,* Rome
BSBAP *Bulletin de la Societe Royale Belge d'Anthropologie et de Préhistoire*, Brussels
CAH *Cambridge Ancient History*
CCCA I-VII M. J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Cultus Cybelae Attidisque, I-VII,* Leiden 1977-1989
CCID. Hörig, E. Schwertheim, *Corpus Cultus Iovis Dolicheni,* Leiden-New York-Kobenhavn-Köln 1987
CCIS E. N. Lane, *Corpus Cultus Iovis Sabazii, I-III,* Leiden 1983-1989
CIL *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin 1863-)
CMRDM *Corpus Monumentorum religionis dei Menis, I-IV,* Leiden 1971-1978
CRAI *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Paris
GGB *Godišnjak grada Beograda,* Beograd
Godišnjak ANUBiH *Godišnjak Akademije Nauka i Umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine,* Sarajevo
Гласник САД *Гласник Српског Археолошког друштва,* Београд
GZM *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja,* Sarajevo
EPRO *Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain*, Leiden
Historia *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte,* Stuttgart
ИБАД *Известия на Благарското археологическо дружество*, София
ILJug *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iuggoslavia inter annos MCMXL et MCMLX et interannos MCMLX et MCMLXX et inter annos MCMII et MCMXL repertae et editae sunt,* Ljubljana 1963, 1978, 1986
IMS *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure*, I, II, III/2, IV, V, VI, Beograd 1976-1995
JHS *The Journal of Hellenic Studies,* London *JRS Journal of Roman Studies,* London
LIMC *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, I-VIII, Zürich-Münich, 1981-1997; VIII, Zürich Düsseldorf, 1997
MAA *Macedonia Acta Archaeologica,* Скопје
MDAI(R) *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts, Roemische Abteilung,* Rome
MEFRA *Mélanges de l'Ecole francaise de Rome,* Antiquité
RA *Revue Archéologique,* Paris
RE *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der classischen Altertums-wissenschaft*, edd. G. Wissowa, E. Kroll *et al.*, Berlin & Stuttgart, 1893-78
RHR *Revue de l'histoire des religions,* Paris
RIB *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain,* eds. R. G. Collingwood, R. P. Wright, Oxford 1965
RIU *Die Römischen Inschriften Ungarns,* Amsterdam 1976
Споменик СКА *Споменик Српске Краљевске Академије Наука и Уметности, Београд*
TAPhA *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association,* Baltimore
VAHD *Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku,* Split
VAMZ *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu,* Zagreb

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VII Catalogue

The catalogue of the Asia Minor and Syrian cult monuments from Roman Central Balkans is divided into two main sections, where the first section encompasses Asia Minor deities, while Syrian gods and goddesses are presented within the second section. Each section is further divided into several subsections, each dedicated to a particular deity with epigraphic and archaeological material connected to the god or goddess in question. The monuments in each section are arranged by the kind of the monument (sculpture, statue, relief, applique, etc.) and are described by the parameters given in CSIR guidelines. Therefore, each catalogue entry includes: a catalogue number, a heading which presents a short description of the object, a plate and/or figure number, location where the monument was found, present location with an inventory number if there is one, material, dimensions, condition of the monument, short description and observations about the monument, proposed dating and bibliography in chronological order. Since some of the monuments are lost, stolen or destroyed during the two World wars, their description is based solely on the existing literature.

I ASIA MINOR DEITIES

I MAGNA MATER

1. Votive altar. Arčar (Ratiaria). Found as *spolia* in Arčar. White marble. 0.24x0.33x0.43m. Fragmented. Part of the marble altar with inscription: *[...Matri] Deum Au[g(ustae)...].* First half of the 2nd century. Lit.: *CCCA* VI: 115, n. 383.

2. Votive altar (Figure 2). Found in Kostolac, Čair (Viminacium). Now in National Museum in Požarevac, inv. num. 02_2728. Limestone. 0.68x0.31x0.29m. The upper and lower parts of the altar are damaged due to atmospheralia, as the surface of the altar. The figure of a dolphin that existed in the upper part of the monument isn't visible today. On the top of the monument a concave square (for libation?). The inscription: *[Pro salut]e Aug(usti) | C.Val(erius) Vi|bianus | nautar(um) | q(uin) q(uennalis) | sig(num) Ma|tris deum et | ad restitu|tionem tem|pli Neptuni | s(estertium) II (milia) n(ummum) d(ono) d(edit).* The end of the 2nd century. Lit.: Вулић 1905: 82, num.9; Marić 1933: 75; Zotović 1964: 273-274; *IMS* II: 104-105, num. 61.

3. Statue of Magna Mater (Figure 3). Found in Novo Selo (near Prilep). Now in Archaeological Museum of Skoplje, inv. num. 2. White marble. 0,50m. Fragmented. Statue of a woman seated on the throne. Her head and both arms with attributes are missing. Dressed in chiton, with two fragmented lion figures flanking the throne. Statue's feet are leaning on a small klyne. 2nd century. Lit.: Вулић 1931: 164, num. 426; Marić 1933: 73-77; Zotović 1964: 278, num. 15; Düll 1977: 416, num. 281, Abb. 71; Соколовска 1988: num.9, fig. 9; *CCCA* VI: 93, num. 316.

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

4. Relief of Magna Mater (Figure 4). Found in Stobi. Now in National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 09_2990. White marble. 0,47x0,47x0,14m. Magna Mater presented inside *aedicula* with two Doric columns and acroteriae in the shape of palmette in the corners. The goddess is seated on the throne with *corona muralis* on her head, dressed in a long chiton with short sleeves, with himation over her left shoulder. Both sides of the throne are flanked with lion figures. On the aedicula's wall, beside Magna Mater's left arm, a hand drum *tympanum* hanging on a narrow belt is presented. 2nd century. Lit.: Вулић 1931: 239, num. 638; Marić 1933: 73-77; Zotović 1964: 284-285, num. 31; Düll 1977: 417, num. 282; Соколовска1988: 122-123, num.10, fig. 10; *CCCA* VI: 92, num. 315.

5. Bust of Magna Mater (Figure 5). Unknown locality. Marble. 0,16m. Fragmented. Statue of Magna Mater with a diadem and a veil. Only the upper part of the goddesses' body is preserved, without arms. G. Seure thought that the goddess held a scepter in her right hand and a patera in her left hand. 2nd or 3rd century. Lit.: Seure 1922: 273-274, num. 8, fig. 9; Zotović 1964: 276, num. 12; *CCCA* VI: 93, num. 318.

6. Statue of Magna Mater (Figure 6). Found at Mediana. Now in National Museum in Niš, inv. num. 338/R. White marble. 0,33m. Fragmented. Torso of a goddess in a richly folded chiton. Presumably, the goddess was presented with a *corona muralis* or a diadem and/or veil on her head and holding objects like patera, scepter, *tympanum*. Early 4th century. Lit.: Вулић 1941-1948:

Figure 5

Figure 6

110, num. 239; Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 154, num. 68; Tomović 1993: 91, num. 88, fig. 25.4; Дрча 2004: 154, num. 72.

7. Magna Mater or her priestess (Roman matrona as Magna Mater?). Found in Karataš (Diana). Now in National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 2961/III. White marble. 0,16m. The upper part of a woman's torso. A woman is presented wearing a diadem and a veil. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Tomović 1993: 92, num. 89, fig. 24.3.

8. Applique in the shape of a bust of a goddess with *corona muralis* (Magna Mater?) (Figure 8). Found in Ravna (Timacum Minus). Now lost. Bronze. 0,11m. Applique in the shape of a woman's bust with *corona muralis* on her head. A part of a himation is visible on woman's left shoulder. 2nd or 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1941-48: 49, num. 206; Петровић, Јовановић 1997: 86, num.4, fig. 4.

9. Plate with the representation of Magna Mater (Figure 9). Found in Tekija (Transdierna), in a hoard. Now in National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 09_819. Silver. 11,5x8,5cm. Weight 11.29gr. Relief representation of *aedicula* decorated with vegetative ornaments and rosettes. Inside *aedicula*, a goddess presented en face. The goddess wears *corona muralis* on her head, she is dressed in a chiton, with a himation over her left

Figure 8

Figure 9

shoulder. With her left hand bent in the elbow, she holds a himation, while in her right hand a patera is presented. A snake drinks from a patera. A big plant with a flower on the top is presented on the left side from the goddess. The second half of the 1st century. Lit.: Mano-Zisi 1957: 33-35, num. 34, T. XXIII; Picard 1961: 122-124; Lane 1985: 115, num. 382; Јовановић 1990: 29-36.

10. Gem with the representation of Magna Mater (Figure 10). Of unknown provenience. Now in National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 1884/II. Jasper red colour. 16,4x13x3,6mm. Gem of oval shape with a frontally presented figure of Magna Mater. The goddess is holding her dress with her hands and she is flanked by two lions. One lion is presented walking, while the other lion is ready for the fight. 2nd or 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 423, cat. 332, T. XXVIII/332

11. Gem with the representation of Magna Mater. Of unknown provenience, bought from certain S. Simonović from Belgrade in 1965. year. Now in National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 3848/III. Carnelian of orange color. 16,8x13x4,4mm. Gem of oval shape with the goddess presented frontally, riding a lion. The figure of the animal is turned on the left side. Goddess is presented with the crown on her head, scepter in her left hand and a tympanum or *cornucopia* in her right

Figure 10

hand. Lion's musculature is very skilfully presented. Under the animal's feet there is an inscription OTF. 2nd or 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 423, cat. 333, T. XXIX/333.

II ATTIS[1715]

1. Funerary cippus (Figure 1). Arilje. Now below the marble table in the church of St. Achillius in Arilje (brought from the near-by village Vrane where the remains of Roman necropolis were found). Marble. 0,9x0,67x,0,49m. The funerary cippus is quite damaged, with a front side where a profiled inscription field was, but without an inscription. On the upper part of the monument's front and lateral sides, a double garland of flowers. On the lateral sides *Attis tristis* figures in their usual posture holding *pedum.* 2nd or 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1909: 180, num. 121; Којић 1961: 1, num. Ia.

2. Funerary cippus (Figure 2). Arilje. Limestone. Lost. Funerary cippus with the effaced inscription on the front side and figures of *Attis tristis* on the lateral sides. In the earlier records, there is no description of Attis' figures. 2nd or 3rd century. Lit.: Којић 1961, 1, num. Ib.

3. Funerary cippus (Figure 3). Požega, locality 'Rimsko groblje' ('Roman necropolis'), Blaškovina. Limestone. 0,87x0,82x0,69. Funerary cippus with damaged edges. Above the inscription field, a palmette and right from the palmette a spiral grapevine. On the right lateral side *Attis tristis* figure leant on a pedum. Above *Attis*

[1715] Some of the funerary cippi with the image of *Attis tristis* on both lateral sides are either lost or still *in situ*. In the cases where the monument is lost or is placed in the lapidarium of a local museum, it will be emphasised in the catalogue unit. Otherwise, the monument in question is still *in situ*. Certain monuments, like fragmented funerary cippus from the locality Lisičjak, 'Greek cemetery' on the crossroad with the site Drmanovići, aren't included in the catalogue, because there are no information about the monument except that it contains a figure of *Attis tristis*, on one of its lateral sides.

Figure 1

tristis, a garland. The ornaments of a flower and a grapevine are also presented. N. Vulić presumes that the identical presentation was on the monument's left side. The inscription reads: *D(is) m(anibus)| T(ito) Ael(io) Martiali | dec(urioni) m(unicipii) IIvir(o)| defunc(to) Salo| na an(norum) XL Aur(elia) | Varra coniugi | p(ro) p(ietate).* The second half of the 2nd century. Lit.: CIL III, 8339; Вулић, Ладек, Премерштајн 1903: 83, num. 75; Којић 1961: 1, IIa; Бућић, Петровић 1983: 26, num. 4.

4. Funerary cippus (Figure 4). Požega, locality 'Rimsko groblje' ('Roman necropolis'), Blaškovina. Limestone. 1x0,62m. Fragmented funerary cippus, with the preserved lower part. On the right lateral side, *Attis tristis* image is preserved only from the waist down. Under the image, a grape. 2nd or 3rd century. Lit.: Бошковић *et al.* 1950, 94, fig. 3; Kojić 1961: 1, IIb.

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

5. Funerary cippus (Figure 5). Požega, locality 'Rimsko groblje' ('Roman necropolis'), Blaškovina. Grey limestone. 1,6x0,95x0,6m. Funerary cippus with a garland above the inscription field and a kantharos with grapevine under the inscription field. On both lateral sides, *Attis tristis* image, leant on a pedum, with a garland above and under the figure. The inscription reads: *[D(is)] M(anibus) / [3] Capito / [3] IIvir / mun(icipii) M[al()] / defunc(tus) an(norum) X[3] / FLIEIV et Severa / sorores et / Ulp(iae) [U]rsae an(norum) LX / matri p(ro) p(ietate)*. The second half of the 2nd century. Lit.: *CIL* III 8345; Вулић, Ладек, Премерштајн 1903: 83, num. 76; Вулић 1941-1948: 151, num. 320; Kojić 1961: 1, IIc.

6. Funerary cippus (Figure 6a-c). Village Visibabe, antique necropolis. Now in the yard of National Museum in Kragujevac. Limestone. 1,6m height. On the monument's front side, under the inscription field, a kantharos with grapevine. On both lateral sides, *Attis tristis* figure, leant on a pedum. Under the images of *Attis tristis,* a branch of grapevine with grapes. The inscription reads: *D(is) m(anibus) | P(ublio) Ae(lio) Quint | iliano dec(urioni) | m(unicipii) Ma(lvesatium) II vira | li def(uncto) ann(orum) | LXV P(ubli) Aelii | Maximus et | Silvanus et | Tattaia pa | tri p(ientissimo) p(osuerunt).* The third quarter of the 2nd century. Lit.: Вулић 1941-48:

Figure 5

267; Kojić 1961: XVI. B; *CIL* III 8342; Medini 1981: 565, num. 112; Бућић, Петровић 1983: 26; Зотовић 1995, 116, num. 79; Мандић 2015: 75, num. 1.

7. Funerary cippus. Village Visibabe, antique necropolis Crkvenac, Ježevica. Limestone. 1,6x0,73x0,58m. Fragmented funerary cippus. On the monument's front side, under the inscription field, a kantharos with grapevine. On both lateral sides *Attis tristis* image. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић, Премерштајн 1900: 49, 6A; Kojić 1961: 1, IId; Мандић 2015: 82, num. 1.

8. Funerary cippus. Village Visibabe, antique necropolis Crkvenac, Ježevica. Limestone.. On both lateral sides *Attis tristis* image. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић, Премерштајн 1900: 49, 6B; Kojić 1961, 1, II d.

Figure 6

9. Funerary cippus. Village Visibabe, antique necropolis Crkvenac, Ježevica. Limestone. On both lateral sides *Attis tristis* image. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић, Премерштајн 1900: 49, 6C; Kojić 1961, 1, II d.

10. Funerary cippus (Figure 10a-b) Village Visibabe, antique necropolis Crkvenac, Ježevica. Now in the lapidarium of National Museum in Užice (inv. num. 2349). Grey limestone. 1,66x0,88x0,63m. Funerary cippus is slightly damaged on the top. Above the inscription field, two garlands. Under the inscription field a kantharos with grapevine. On the right lateral side, a figure of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum (in J. Medini's opinion, Attis is leant on a torch). Attis holds his right hand beside his cheek. The monument's left lateral side contains the same image. The inscription reads: *D(is) m(anibus) | T (itus) Ae(lius) Maximus | vix(it) an(nos) XXX h(ic) s(itus) e(st) | Ae(li) Vigor Maximil|la Cinthena | procurant(e) | Aur(elia) Maximilla | [- .* The second half or the third quarter of the 2nd century. Lit.: Вулић, Премерштајн 1900: 49, 6D; CIL III, 14611; Вулић 1941-1948: 251, бр. 491; Kojić 1961: 1, IId; Medini 1981: 560-561, num. 104; Буњић, Петровић 1983: 28, num. 23; Зотовић 1995: 115, num. 72; Мандић 2015: *83,* num. 2.

11. Funerary cippus (Figure 11). Village Visibabe, antique necropolis Crkvenac, Ježevica. Limestone. 1,6x0,73x0,58m. Funerary cippus is damaged in the upper part and on the right lateral side. Above the inscription field, traces of garlands, under the inscription field a kantharos with a grapevine. On both lateral sides image of *Attis tristis.* 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић, Премерштајн 1900: 49, 6E; Вулић 1941-48: 252, num. 492; Kojić 1961: 1, IId; Буњић, Петровић 1983: 28, num. 24; Зотовић 1995, 115, num. 73.

12. Funerary cippus (Figure 12a-b). Locality 'Starinsko groblje' ('Seosko groblje', Rimsko groblje', Madžarsko groblje'), antique necropolis, Tubići. Marble. 1,57x0,90x0,82m. Funerary cippus with an ornament of a garland above the inscription field and a motif of a grapevine under the inscription field. On both lateral sides *Attis tristis* figure standing on a pedestal in the shape of a hemisphere, with his hand leant on a pedum. The inscription reads: *D(is) m(anibus) | T(itus) Aur(elius) Silva|nus dec(urio) m(unicipii) vixit an(nos) LXX | H(ic) s(itus) e(st) | T(itus) Aur(elius) Proculus patri | p(ientissimo) p(ossuit).* Dating: 201 to 300. Lit.: *IlJug* 3, 1471; Вулић, Ладек, Премерштајн 1903: 88, num. 10; Kojić 1961: 1, IIe; Зотовић 1995: 114, num. 71; Мандић 2015: 50-51, num. 3.

Figure 10

Figure 11

13. Funerary cippus. Vranjani, but probably from the cemetery of the village Rasne (2km south from the village Visibabe). Limesone. 1,25 height. Funerary cippus with the images of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum on both lateral sides. The inscription reads: *T(itus) [Au] r(elius) Marcus / dec(urio) m(unicipii) def(unctus) / Salona an(norum) L / Au<r=I>(eli) A[l]banus / Li[3]us Lu/<p=I>us patri / p(ientissimo) p(osuerunt).* Dating: 151-300. *CIL* III, 8344 (*CIL* III, 1671); Kojić 1961: 1, III; Буђић, Петровић 1983: 27, num. 17.

14. Funerary cippus. The cemetery of the village Gorobilje, the area of locality Visibabe. Limestone. Funerary cippus with the image of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Kojić 1961, 1, IV.

15. Funerary cippus. Kalenić, north from Požega. Limestone. 1,45x0,84x0,68m. Funerary cippus analogous by the present ornaments to the funerary monuments from Ježevac. Above the inscription field a garland, under the inscription field a kantharos with grapevine. The images of *Attis tristis* presented on both lateral sides in his usual posture. 2nd or the 3rd century. Вулић, Премерштајн 1900, 48, 5; Вулић 1941-1948: 152, num. 322; Kojić 1961: 1, V.

16. Funerary cippus (Figure 16a-b) Locality Karan, now in the Lapidarium in Karan. Limestone. 1,5x0,78x0,58m. Funerary cippus with two garlands above the inscription field and a kantharos with grapevine. On both sides, the images of *Attis tristis* with a motif of garland above them

Figure 12

and grapevine branches under them. The end of the 2nd century. Lit.: Петровић 1986: 26, num. 22; Зотовић 1995: 116, бр. 81; Мандић 2015: 196, num. 8.

17. Funerary cippus (Figure 17a-b). Locality Karan, now in the Lapidarium in Karan. Grey limestone. 1,67x0,87x0,6m. Funerary cippus with two garlands above the inscription field and a kantharos with grapevine under the inscription field. On both lateral sides, the images of *Attis tristis* holding a turned upside down torch are presented. Above and under the figures, one garland is shown. The end of the 2nd century. Петровић 1986: 26, num. 18; Зотовић 1995: 116-117, num. 82.

18. Funerary cippus (Figure 18a-c). Locality Karan, now in the Lapidarium in Karan. Funerary cippus in the shape of a pyramid, with a flat top and the lower part in the form of a parallelepiped. Pyramidal part. 1,2x0,6x0,52m. Parallelepiped: 0,52x0,64x0,56m. The monument's lower part is ornamented on three sides

Figure 17

with the following scenes: on the left side a rider on the horse is presented, on the monument's front side there is a scene of a funeral banquet, while on the right side of the monument, a man sitting beside a tripod with a vessel and an oval object (perhaps bread?) is shown. The upper pyramidal part of the monument is also decorated on three sides – two figures of syncretistic image of *Attis tristis* and genius of death leant on a pedum are presented on lateral sides, with a motif of a dolphin under the figures. On the monument's front side on a pyramidal part, a kantharos with grapevine and grapes is shown. The first half of the 4th century. Lit.: Вулић 1933: 76, num. 216; Вулић 1941-1948: 245; Петровић 1986: 27, num. 20; Мандић 2015: 196-197, num. 9.

19. Funerary cippus (Figure 19). Locality Kremna. old cemetery. The monument was found in secondary use near a fountain near Moljković Han. Supposedly brought from the place Grobljanski vis, near Gornja Raduša. Limestone. 1,1x0,65mx0,54m. Funerary cippus

Figure 18

with the images of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum on both lateral sides. Above each image, two garlands with rosettes are presented. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић, Премерштајн 1900: 50; Вулић 1941-48: 246, num. 483, fig. 483; Kojić 1961: 1, VII; Зотовић 1995: 117, 84.

20. Funerary cippus. Locality Kremna, Grobljanski vis, near Gornja Raduša. Grey limestone. 0,92x0,74x0,46m. The funerary cippus was broken in the middle. Above the inscription field, two garlands. Under the inscription field, a kantharos with grapevine. On the monument's left lateral side, an image of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum is shown, touching with his right hand his right cheek unlike the image of *Attis tristis* represented on the monument's right lateral side. Above both images, a garland is shown, while under the images a spiral of ivy branches is presented. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1941-48, 246, num. 5; Зотовић 1995, 117, num. 83.

21. Funerary cippus. Locality Kriva Reka, antique necropolis. Limestone. 0,8x0,58x0,28m. Funerary cippus damaged in the upper, lower and right side. On the monument's front side, two busts are presented (the left bust is probably a female bust). Both figures hold their right hand on the belly. Under the busts, an inscription field without the preserved inscription. On the monument's left side, an image of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum is presented. The pedum's top is crooked. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1909, 187, num. XXI; Kojić 1961, 1, VIII; Мандић 2015: 200, num. 1.

Figure 19

22. Funerary cippus (Figure 22a-b). Tučkovo (built in a small bridge in Jelen Do), now in the yard of the National Museum in Čačak, inv. num. A-1177. Grey limestone. 1,29x0,65x0,59m. In the monument's both lateral sides,

Figure 22

the figures of *Attis tristis* with a pedum. Inscription reads: *D(is) M(anibus) /Ael(ius) Atan...*2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: *Вулић* 1909, 177, num. 119; Вулић 1941-1948, 158, num. 328; IlJug 1492; Ферјанчић, Јеремић, Гојгић 2008: 64, бр. 16; Мандић 2015: 90, num. 1.

23. Funerary cippus (Figure 23). Ljuća, near Pljevlja. Now in the cemetery in Ljuća. Limestone. 1,16x0,64x0,5m. On the monument's left lateral side, a figure of *Attis tristis,* leant on a crooked pedum is presented on a low pedestal. On the figure's left side, ears of corn are presented, while under it a kantharos with grapevine is shown. The 3rd century. Вулић 1941-48, 133, num. 294; Kojić 1961, 2, IX; Зотовић 1995, 119, num. 94; Мандић 2015. 169-170, num. 1.

24. Funerary cippus. Otanj (probably locality 'Crkvine' where large antique necropolis was discovered). Grey limestone. 1,62x0,68x0,49m. Funerary cippus with two garlands above the inscription field and a kantharos with spiral ringlets. On both lateral sides, the images of *Attis tristis* with a torch turned upside down are presented. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић, Премерштајн 1900: 48, 3b; Kojić 1961: 2, XI.

25. Funerary cippus. Pljevlja. Limestone. 1,75x0,92x0,7m. Funerary cippus with damaged inscription field on the front side. Above the inscription field, vegetative ornaments are shown. On monument's both lateral sides, the images of *Attis tristis* are presented. The Attis' figure on the left lateral side holds a torch turned upside down, while the Attis' figure on the right lateral side, holds a raised torch. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1931: 122, num. 296; Kojić 1961: XII.a.

Figure 23

26. Funerary cippus. Pljevlja. Limestone. 1,75m height. Funerary cippus with damage inscription field. On both monument's lateral sides, the images of *Attis tristis* with a pedum. 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1931: 216; Вулић 1948-41: 142-143, num. 309; Kojić 1961: XII. b; Зотовић 1995: 119, num. 97.

27. Funerary cippus. Pljevlja. Marble. Funerary monument with a relief on the front side where two male figures walking in the direction to the left lateral side of the monument, are presented. The first man holds a glass in his raised right hand and grapes in his left hand. The other male figure holds a goblet in his right hand and a patera in his left hand. On the monument's left lateral side, the figure of *Attis tristis* is presented. 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1931: 121. num. 293; Вулић 1941-1948: 144, num. 311; Kojić 1961: XIIc; Мандић 2015: 174-175, num. 11.

28. Funerary cippus. Rosulje near Pljevlja. Limestone. 1,32x0,72x0,52m. Fragmented funerary cippus, with two garlands above and under the inscription field. On the monument's left lateral side, the image of *Attis*

Figure 30

tristis. The inscription reads: *D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) / T(itus) Aur(elius) Ru[fu]s / Belzeiu[s] / viv(u)s sibi / et Aur(eliae) Fusc[ae] / b[3] / [3] an(norum) / XX[3]M[3] / RM dom[um] / aeternam / fecit po/suit o(ssa) v(obis) b(ene).* Dating: 150-250. Lit.: *IlJug* 3, 1731; Вулић 1934: 17, num. 21; *IlJug* 1986, 1731; Зотовић 1995: 119, num. 98.

29. Funerary cippus. Nefertara, near Pljevlja. Limestone. 0,2x0,44x0,31m. Fragmented funerary monument with the female bust on the front side and perhaps a bust of Attis beside. The woman is dressed in a chiton and has a veil on her head. On the monument's left lateral side, a figure of *Attis tristis* is shown with a torch turned upside down. 3rd-4th century. Lit.: Medini 1981: 576, num. 133.

30. Funerary cippus (Figure 30a-c). Komini (Municipium S), discovered above the grave in necropolis I. Now in the Homeland Museum in Pljevlja. Limestone. 1,4x0,82x0,63m. Fragmented funerary cippus with leaves around the inscription field on the front side. On the monument's right lateral side the figure of Attis naked from waist down is presented on a high pedestal. With his left hand, he touches his left cheek. On the monument's left lateral side a figure similar to Attis' image is presented, dressed in a short tunic with exposed genitals, with a cloak and also stands on a pedestal. The figure's right hand is bent in the elbow and placed on the chest, while in its left hand, a short object is shown (J. Medini suggests that it is a staff?). The inscription reads: *D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) | Aur(elius) Ma | ximux | Argeni | anus d(ecurio) m(unicipi) | v(ivo) s(ibi) p(osuit) et Aur(eliae) Maximin(a)e | fili(a)e qu(a)e v(ixit) an(nos) XXX.* Dated: 151-250. Lit.: *IlJug* 2, 604; AE 1979, 453; Цермановић-Кузмановић 1968: 203-204, num. 3, fig. 5-7; Medini 1981: 577-578, num. 135; Мандић 2015: 166-167, num. 19.

31. Funerary cippus. Komini (Municipium S), discovered above the grave in necropolis I. Now in Homeland Museum in Pljevlja. Limestone. Funerary monument with a female bust and a niche on the front side. The woman holds her right hand on her chest. Above the female's bust two columns, rosette and leaves are presented, while under the female's bust a vessel is shown. On the monument's left lateral side, the image of *Attis tristis* with a mustache and a beard, standing on a pedestal is presented. 3rd or the 4th century. Lit.: Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1973: 3, 8-9, fig. 6, 10, 13; Medini 1981: 578-579, num. 136.

32. Funerary cippus (Figure 32a-b). Komini (Municipium S), discovered above the grave in necropolis I. Now in Homeland Museum in Pljevlja. Limestone. Fragmented funerary cippus with a preserved head of *Attis tristis* on a lateral side. Above the inscription field, a wreath with stylized rosette and palm branch is shown. The inscription reads: *D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) / Aplis Aurel(ius) / Argurianus / [.* The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Medini 1981: 579, num. 137; AE 2007, 1060; Loma 2003: 59, num. 8.

Figure 32

Figure 33

33. Funerary stele (Figure 33). Kolovrat. Limestone. 1,55x0,67. Funerary stele with a relief presenting four busts on the front side. Above the relief, a wreath with a rosette in the center and leaves around. In the relief, two female busts, one male bust and one child's bust are shown. One woman holds an apple in her right hand, a child holds an ivy leaf in his right hand. Under the relief, a kantharos flanked by two gryphons is presented. The inscription reads: *D(is) m(anibus) s(acrum)| Quintus Dar|danae c(oniugi) et Q|uintinae f(iliae) vi|vis et sibi p(osuit).* On both monument's lateral sides, the images of *Attis tristis* are presented. The end of the 2nd century or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Цермановић-Кузмановић 1989: 8-10, num. 5, fig. 5; Зотовић 1995: 104-105, num. 19; Мандић 2015: 128, num. 10.

34. Funerary cippus (Figure 34). Brodarevo, Davidovica, the area of Prijepolje. Now used as a column for a marble table in the church at Davidovica. Limestone. 1x0,61x0,39m. Funerary cippus with the image of *Attis tristis* on both lateral sides. Attis is presented with his raised right hand in which he holds a round object, while in his left hand he holds a grape. 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1931, 133, num. 330; Мандић 2015: 141,

35. Funerary cippus. Locality 'Greek cemetery', Drmanovići, area of Prijepolje. Now in the Homeland Museum in Prijepolje. Funerary cippus with the image of *Attis tristis* standing on a column, on one of the lateral sides. The inscription reads: *D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) Aur(elia) Com(pito) quae | v(ixit) a(nnis) XII Bo(dusus) fi(liae) def(unctae).* 3rd century. Lit.: Мандић 2015: 58, num. 1.

36. Funerary cippus. Sikirići. Limestone. Funerary monument with the images of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum on both lateral sides. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Imamović 1977: 442, num. 218; Зотовић 1995: 120, num. 102.

Figure 34

37. Funerary cippus. Crvica. Limestone. 1,44x0,6x0,42m. Funerary cippus broken in the middle, lower part is preserved. On the monument's right lateral side, the image of *Attis tristis* holding in his right hand an object with a handle (a mirror?). Around the profiled field with the image of *Attis tristis,* vegetative ornaments of branches and grapevine. 3rd century. Lit.: Imamović 1977: 442, num. 217; Зотовић 1995: 120, num. 101.

38. Funerary cippus. Crvica. Limestone. 1,4x0,81m. Funerary monument with *Attis tristis* image on both lateral sides. The inscription reads: *D(is) m(anibus) | Ul(piae) Cat[t]ae | an(norum) L | Lucius | coniugi | pient(issimae) et si | bi vivo p(osuit).* Dating: 101-170. *CIL* III, 14219; Зотовић 1995: 121, num. 104.

39. Funerary cippus. Crvica. Limestone. 1,3x0,67m. Fragmented funerary cippus with the images of *Attis tristis* on both lateral sides. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Зотовић 1995: 121, num. 105.

40. Funerary cippus. Grebnice, between Velika and Mala Gostilja. Grey limestone. 1,57x0,88x0,68m. On both monument's lateral sides, the images of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum are shown. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Imamović 1977: 446, num. 227; Medini 1981: 555, num. 97; Зотовић 1995: 121, num. 107.

41. Funerary cippus. Veliko Gostilje. Limestone. 0,9x0,68x0,43m. Fragmented funerary monument with the image of *Attis tristis* on the right lateral side. The left lateral side is missing. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Зотовић 1995: 121, num. 108.

42. Funerary cippus. Klašnik. Limestone. 1,12x0,35x0,57m. Fragmented funerary cippus with the figure of *Attis tristis* on the left lateral side. J. Medini suggests that in Attis' right hand, a torch upside down was presented. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Imamović 1977: 444, num. 224; Medini 1981: 554, num. 96; Зотовић 1995: 121, num. 109.

43. Funerary cippus. Štitarevo Donje (the monument was found on the medieval cemetery in the locality Gajevine). Limestone. 0,77x0,82x0,6m. On both monument's lateral sides, the images of *Attis tristis* holding a torch are presented. The inscription reads: *D(is) m(anibus) | Calv(us an . . . . | XXVIII . . .* The end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Imamović 1977: 444, num. 221; Зотовић 1995: 122, num. 112.

44. Funerary cippus. Štitarevo Donje (the monument was found on the middle-ages cemetery in the locality Gajevine). Grey limestone. 1,1x0,87x0,68m. Fragmented funerary monument, preserved in the lower part. On both lateral sides, the image of *Attis tristis* is presented. The inscription reads: *]M[3]/IS[3] / fil[i]o(?) [3]V[3] / LI[3] pos(uit) sib[i 3] / [3]NI[3] / IM DASSIO V[3]I / AMC RVARISSIM / AD VIVINIIV .* 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Imamović 1977: 444, num. 222; Medini 1981: 553, num. 94; *Il Jug* 1561; Зотовић 1995: 122, num. 113.

45. Funerary cippus. Rogatica. Limestone. 1,62x0,88x0,45m. Damaged funerary monument, with profiled inscription field without the inscription. On both lateral sides, the images of *Attis tristis* are presented. The figure of *Attis tristis* on the monument's right lateral side holds a pedum. The figure of *Attis tristis* on the monument's left lateral side holds a torch turned upside down. On the right lateral side of the monument, the image of a dolphin and two garlands are presented. On the left lateral side of the monument, the image of a rabbit is shown. The inscription reads: *D(is) M(anibus) / L(ucio) A[el]io / [3]lv / i[3]va[3] / [6] / [3]*

Figure 46

lo / [3 fi]lio / [3 pare]/n[tes b(ene)] m(erenti) [p(osuerunt)] Dating: 101-200. Lit.: Imamović 1977: 444, num. 220; Medini 1981: 548, num. 88; *Il Jug* 1570; *CIL* III, 12754; Зотовић 1995: 123, num. 117.

46. Funerary cippus (Figure 46, http://lupa.at/23798?query=1793267277). Rudo. Limestone. 0,72x0,62m. The upper part of the funerary cippus is preserved, with the images of *Attis tristis* on both lateral sides. The inscription reads: *D(is) m(anibus) | T(itus) F(lavius) Silva | nus | dec(urio) M(alvesiati) | muni(cipi) Fl(avii) / [.* 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Imamović 1977: 446, num. 226; Medini 1981: 550, num. 90; *IlJug* 3, 1558; Зотовић 1995: 123-124, num.122.

47. Funerary cippus. Rudo. Now in Zemaljski Muzej Sarajevo. Limestone. 1,2x0,68x0,6m. Funerary monument with the preserved image of *Attis tristis* on the right lateral side, leant on a torch. The inscription reads: *[D(is)] M(anibus) / [2]tiae Balbiae / [c]oniug(i) pie[nti] s/[s]imae an[n(orum) 2]VI / [i]tem [1] Aureliis / Silvano et Propin/quiano et B[a]etae / [et] Iuniori fi[l]iis / T(itus) Aurelius / Silvanus / dec(urio) IIvir / municipi(i) / Malve(n) siati/[u]m posuit.* Dating: 170-250. Lit.: *IlJug* 2, 621; *AE* 2010, 1161; Зотовић 1995: 124, num. 123.

48. Funerary cippus (Figure 48). Požega. Now in the lapidarium of National Museum in Užice. Limestone. 1x0,6x0,5m. Funerary cippus with the images of *Attis tristis* on both lateral sides and the ornament of grapevine. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Зотовић 1973: 15; Зотовић 1995: 117, num. 86; Мандић 2015: 185, num. 3.

Figure 48

49. Funerary cippus. Požega. Limestone. 1,07x0,64x0,5m. On the monument's left lateral side, the image of *Attis tristis.* 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Зотовић 1973: 15; Зотовић 1995: 117, num. 87.

50. Funerary cippus. The village Gornja Bukovica, Ljubovija. White marble. 1,6x0,87x0,54m. On the monument's left lateral side, the image of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum. The inscription reads: *D(is) m(anibus) | C. T[essio] Mar | cell[in]o . . . . | vixit an(nis) XXII . . | C. Tes(sio) Paterno . . . qui | vix(it)] ann(is) VIII | Ulp(ia) Ma[rci f.] Bi | dn[a] filio [e]t | marito | pientissimis.* 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1933: 50, num. 159; Kojić 1961: 3, num. 1.

51. Funerary cippus (Figure 51). The locality 'Grčko groblje' (Greek cemetery), Zvečnja, Godečevo. Limestone. 0,9x0,6x0,55m. The monument is half buried into the ground, only its right lateral side is visible with the image of *Attis tristis.* The 3rd century. Lit.: Мандић 2015: 57, num. 2.

52. Funerary cippus. Suvodol. Grey limestone. 1,55x0,68x0,37m. The funerary monument with the images of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum, on both lateral sides. The inscription reads: *Aurel(ius) De|mas vix(it) ann(is) | LXXX. Aurel(ius) | Luc[idus] et | Aurelia Aqui|lina et Aurel(ius?) | Vitalis nepo| tes et here|des avio be|ne merenti | posuerunt.* 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1900: 43, num. 62; Kojić 1961: 3, num. 3.

53. Funerary cippus. Unknown provenience (N. Vulić suggests that the monument was discovered in the mining area of Kosmaj). Fragmented funerary cippus with a niche on the front side and two female and one male bust presented in it. They are dressed in tunics, with cloaks over their shoulders. All three figures hold their right hand on their chest, while the first figure from the left side holds a round object (perhaps an apple?). On both monument's lateral sides, the images of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum are presented. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1909: 174, A; Kojić 1961: 3, num. 4.

54. Funerary monument (?) (Figure 54). Drmno, Požarevac. Now in the National Museum in Požarevac, inv. num. 02_2666. Sandstone. 0,71x0,66x,0,3m. On the front side of the monument, two niches are presented, divided by a column. In each niche, *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum is presented. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1941-48: 149, num. 318; Kojić 1961: 3, A.

55. Funerary monument (?) (Figure 55). Kostolac. Lost. Limestone. On the front side of the monument, two niches with the figures of *Attis tristis.* 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић, Ладек, Премерштајн 1903: 70; Kojić 1961: 3, B.

Figure 51

Figure 54

Figure 55

Figure 56

56. Funerary cippus (Figure 56a-c). Čair, Kostolac. White marble. *0*,87x0,55x0,55m. Funerary monument with the images of *Attis tristis* leant on pedum's top, as though as they sleep. The inscription reads: *M. Antoni(o) | M. F(ilio) Fabia | Fabiano proc(uratori) | XL Galliarum | et portus item argentariar(um) | Pannonicar(um)| c(onductori) portori Illyrici| patrono bono | mercator lib(ertus).* The second half of the 2nd century. Lit.: Вулић 1905: 81, num. 8; Kojić 1961: 3, num. 2; Kondić 1965: 241, num. 8; *IMS* II: 108, num. 69.

57. Funerary cippus. Drmno, Požarevac. Limestone. On the monument's both lateral sides, the images of *Attis tristis* leant on a pedum are presented. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1941-48: 150, num. 319.

58. Two sarcophagus' fragments. Kostolac. White limestone. 0,68x0,8x0,16m. Two fragments of a sarcophagus with the images of *Attis tristis.* The figure of the first Attis is naked, without a Phrygian hat on the head and holds a raised pedum and a syrinx in his hands. The figure of the second Attis is presented with syrinx as well. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1909: 131, U; Kojić 1961: 3, num. 4.

59. Statuette of a genius of winter presented as Attis (Figure 59a-b). Unknown provenience, Roman limes. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 09_2712_2. Bronze. 9,3cm height. The figure of a naked young man with a Phrygian hat, holding a rabbit (duck? fish?**)** in his right hand and a pedum (knife?) in his left hand. The statuette could present an import, from the middle to the end of the 3rd century. Lit.: Antička bronza u Jugoslaviji 1969: num. 128; Величковић 1972: 62, num. 91, fig. 91; *CCCA* VI: 113, num. 378; Ružić 2006: 257, num. 332.

Figure 59

60. Applique (Figure 60). Ritopek, redeemed from D. Karaklajić from Brestovik, now in the Belgrade City Museum, inv. num. AA/1275. Bronze. Dim.: 3,8cm. The bust of a man with a Phrygian hat. Mediocre provincial work. 3rd century. Lit.: Бојовић 1985: 36, cat. 25; *Античка бронза Сингидунума* 1997: 70, num. 49; Ružić 2006: 320, num. 445 (M. Ružić thinks that the bust represents god Mēn and not god Attis).

61. Applique (Figure 61). Unknown provenience, redeemed from R. Stojanović from Ritopek. Now in the Belgrade City Museum, inv. AA/1806. Bronze. Dim.: 2,3cm. The head of a young man with a Phrygian hat. Provincial work. 3rd century. Lit.: Бојовић 1985, 36, num. 28; *Античка бронза Сингидунума* 1997: 71, num. 52.

Figure 60

Figure 62

Figure 61

Figure 63

62. Applique (Figure 62). Unknown provenience, Roman Limes. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 09_2686. Bronze. Dim.: 4,4cm. Applique of a male bust with a Phrygian hat. Provincial work. 3rd century. Lit.: Величковић 1972: 85, num. 130, fig. 130; Ružić 2006: 320, num. 446.

63. Terracotta (Figure 63). Viminacium, necropolis 'Više grobalja'. Now in the National Museum of Požarevac, inv. num. C 5117. Red clay. Fragmented terracotta presenting a young man with a Phrygian hat. Provincial work of serial production. The second half of the 2nd or the first half of the 3rd century. Lit.: Зотовић, Јордовић 1990: 23, fig. 11.

III SABAZIUS

1. Votive altar. Kuline, near Ravna (Timacum Minus). Now in National Museum in Niš, inv. num. 33/E. Sandstone. 1,08x0,51x0,45m. The votive altar with damaged right upper side, as the lower parts. The inscription reads: *Pro salute imp(eratoris) | Flaviu[s] Cleme[s] (?) | Saba[zi]o pate|rno A[ug(usto)] posu|i[t M. Ant] o[nio] | Gordiano | Augusto et C[lodio] | Pomp(eiano) co(n) s(ulibus).* Dating: 241. Lit.: Вулић 1941-1948: 82, num. 173; *AE* 1962, 338; Zotović 1966: 104-105, num. 50; *IlJug* 1986, 1283; *IMS* III/2, 70-71, num. 13.

2. Votive altar. The monastery St. Petka, Dragoman, Pirot. Now at the Archaeological Institute and Museum in Sofia, inv. num. 1231. Limestone. 0,75x0,49x0,57. The votive altar is chipped on its right side. The inscription reads: *Αγαθηι τι[χηι] Αυρ(ήλιος) Μεστρια[νοσ] στρατιώτήσ λε[γ](ιώνοσ) β Ιτα(λικήσ) κυρίω Σαβαζιω εκ προνοιας εύχαρισ[τη] ριον εστησε[υ].* The first decades of the 3rd century. Lit.: Kojić 1961: 45; Tacheva-Hitova 1983: 168, num. 12.

3. Marble plate. Necropolis 'Više grobalja', Viminacium. Lost. 0,11x0,12x0,2. The round table with a partly preserved inscription: - - -Σ]άβαζιν[- - - Between the 1st and the 3rd century. Lit.: *IMS* II: 79, num. 39.

4. Statue of Sabazius. Vidin. Bronze. Fragmented bronze statue of Sabazius' bust, pine cone, an eagle and a snake entwined around the tree. The eagle stands on the top of the tree. Between the 1st and the 4th century. Lit.: Велков 1932-1933: 405, fig. 158.

5. The needle with a head in the shape of Sabazius' votive hand. Trajanov most, Pontes, square L/4, the level under the archaeological layer B, C-255/79. Ivory. 16cm height. Fragmented ivory needle with a head in the shape of Sabazius' votive hand. The end of the 2nd or the first half of the 3rd century. Lit.: Petković 1995: num. 343, T. XVI, 3.

6. The needle with a head in the shape of Sabazius' votive hand (Figure 6). The necropolis 'Više grobalja', Viminacium. Ivory. 4,4cm height. Fragmented ivory needle with a head in the shape of Sabazius' votive hand. Between the 1st and the 3rd century. Lit.: Зотовић, Јордовић 1990: T. CLXXXV, 7; Petković 1995: num. 342, T.XVI/2.

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

7. The needle with a head in the shape of Sabazius' votive hand (Figure 7). The necropolis 'Više grobalja', Viminacium. Ivory. 7,8cm height. Fragmented ivory needle with a head in the shape of Sabazius' votive hand in which is a pine cone (?). The second half of the 2nd century or the first half of the 3rd century. Lit.: Зотовић, Јордовић 1990: 23, fig. 12; Petković 1995: num. 341, T.XVI/1.

8. Silver plate with the representation of god Sabazius (Figure 8, 8a). Tekija, Transdierna. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 09_820. Silver. 9,5x11cm, weight 9,45gr. The silver plate with the preserved upper part. The relief presentation shows the aedicula decorated with vegetative ornaments and rosettes. Inside the aedicula, a mature bearded man is presented, dressed in chiton and himation, probably holding a patera in his right hand (the object is not preserved). On god's left side, a winged caduceus is presented, while above him two entwined snakes are shown. There is a bee on the leaves, while on the god's right side a two-headed axe is presented. The second half of the 1st century. Lit.: Mano-Zisi 1957: 35-39, num. 35, T. XXIV; Picard 1961: 160-161, f. 11, 12; Lane 1985: 45, D2; Јовановић 1990: 29-36.

9. The ring with Sabazius' presentation (Figure 9). Vinik, Niš. Now in the National Museum in Niš, inv. num. 399/R. Gold. The diameter 2,2cm. The ring with a wide ellipsoid head with a gemstone from chalcedony. On the gem, a god is presented, standing from the profile. In his right hand, he holds a staff, while in his left hand he holds a pine cone (?). His left arm is stretched towards

Figure 9

a snake entwined around the column, on which an eagle is standing. The god is presented in a short chiton and has a helmet on his head. In front of the column, a four-legged animal is presented, perhaps a ram. The end of the 3rd or the first half of the 4th century. Lit.: Ајдић 1974: 43; Јовановић 1977: 87-90, fig. 1; Jovanović 1978: 19, cat. 8/1.7; Дрча 2004: 190, num. 137; Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 423, cat. 334.

10. Statuette of Sabazius (?). Kostolac, Viminacium. Lost. White marble. 23cm height. The fragmented statuette of which a part of a tree with an entwined snake on it, is saved. Lit.: Вулић 1909: 135, O.

11. Statuette of Sabazius (?). Ravna, Timacum Minus. Now in the National Museum in Niš. White marble. 25 cm width of the pedestal. The fragmented marble statuette with a preserved pair of feet on which one side a turtle is presented, while on the other side parts of a column are visible. Between the 1st and the 4th century. Lit.: Вулић 1941-48: 94, num. 205; Душанић 1975: 136, ft. 33; Tomović 1993: 119, n. 203a, fig. 53. 1a.

IV JUPITER DOLICHENUS

1. Votive altar. Arčar, Ratiaria. Lost. Limestone. The votive altar of a coarse production, provincial work. The inscription reads: *Do | [l]i | ce | no| I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) | Aur(elius) Suria | nus | ex vo | to renova | vit.* The end of the 2nd century. Lit.: Merlat 1951: 40, num 42; Zotović 1966: 85, n. 30; *CCID* 84, n. 109; Bošković-Robert 2006: 55-56, num. 60.

2. Votive altar. Roman castellum, Arčar, Ratiaria. Now in the Archaeological Institute and Museum in Sofia. Limestone. The fragmented votive altar. The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Do[icheno]| pro sa[lute....]| [....]LSEANT [...] | Augg(ustorum) [.....] | P[....].* The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Merlat

1951: 40, num.. 43; Zotović 1966: 86, num. 31; *CCID* 84, num. 110; Bošković-Robert 2006: 56-57, num. 61.

3. Votive altar. Roman castellum, Arčar, Ratiaria. Now in the Archaeological Institute and Museum in Sofia. 0,79x0,3x0,32. The votive altar was found at the end of the 19th century, in the area of the Roman castellum. The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) / pro s(alute) Imp(eratoris) / d(omini) n(ostri) M(arci) Aur(eli) / Antonini Pi(i) / Felicis Aug(usti) / sac(erdotes) Pecta et Fla/ vius Gugaque / pos(uerunt).* The first decades of the 3rd century. Lit.: *AE* 1902, 69; Merlat 1951: 41-42, num. 45; Zotović 1966: 8, num. 33; *CCID* 85, n. 112; Bošković-Robert 2006: 57, num. 62.

4. Votive altar. Arčar, Ratiaria. Now in the Lapidarium in Vidin. Marble. 0,79x0,29x0,2m. The votive altar with a damaged lower part. Above the inscription field, a garland is presented. Both lateral sides are decorated with the motives of an eagle (on the monument's right side) and a snake (on the monument's left side). The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) / pro salute / Titi Iuli / Optati / circitoris p(ortorii) p(ublici) / L(ucius) Licinius / Terminalis / v(otum) s(olvit) [l(ibens) m(erito)].* The 3rd century. Lit.: *AE* 1938, 91; Merlat 1951: 40-41, num. 44; Zotović 1966: 86, num. 32; *AE* 1984, 740; *CCID* 84, num. 111; Bošković-Robert 2006: 52-53, num. 55.

5. Votive altar. Košava, Vidin. Now in the Lapidarium in Vidin. The fragmented votive altar. The inscription reads: *[I(ovi) O(ptimo)] M(aximo) Do[l(icheno)] / [pr]o salut(e) / [dd]ominor(um) / [n]n(ostrorum) Augg(ustorum) et / [Im]pp(eratorum) et Gen(io) col(oniae?) [Ratiariae(?)].* Dating: 201-300. Lit.: *AE* 1938, 92; Merlat 1951: 42, num. 46; Zotović 1966: 87, num. 34; *CCID* 85-86, num. 113; Bošković-Robert 2006: 53, n. 56.

6. Tabula ansata. Jasen, Romulianum,Vidin. Now in the Lapidarium in Vidin. Bronze. 6,3x10,8x0,15cm. The tabula ansata was found inside the Roman castellum in the vicinity of Vidin. The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Dol(icheno) / Aur(elius) Bas/sus sac(erdos) / servus eius.* Dating: between 151 and 300. Lit.: *AE* 1933, 121; Merlat 1951: 43, num. 48; Zotović 1966: 97, num. 38; *CCID* 82, num. 104; Bošković-Robert 2006: 53-54, num. 57.

7. Tabula ansata. Jasen, Romulianum,Vidin. Now in the Lapidarium in Vidin. Bronze. 7cm height, 4,5cm width. The fragmented tabula ansata found inside of the Roman castellum. The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) [M(aximo) D(olicheno)] / Fl(avius) Sabin[us] / Valeria V[3]/ tinsa d(o)no [d(ederunt?) d(e?)] / suo ex iuss<u=O> [dei].* Dating: between 151 and 300. Lit.: *AE* 1933, 122; Merlat 1951: 43-44, num. 49; Zotović 1966: 97-98, num. 39; *CCID* 82, num. 105; Bošković-Robert 2006: 54-55, num. 58.

Figure 8

8. The base of a statuette (Figure 8). Veliko Gradište, Pincum, The Roman fortification. The monument was discovered in 1899. year, sold to the Honvéd Officer of Orsova, Imre Pongrácz, in the late 19th century. Now in the Banat Museum of Timișoara, inv. num. 1300. Grey marble. 5,6cm height, 12,5cm width. The quadrilateral base of a Jupiter Dolichenus' statuette, of which only the bull's hooves and the altar beneath the animal's body are preserved. The presence of the altar under the bull's body is similar to the Jupiter Dolichenus' statuette discovered in dolichenum's sacrarium at Brza Palanka, Egeta. The inscription reads: *Io<v=B>(i) Opt(imo) M(aximo) | D<o=V>l(i)c(h)eno e/x vot(o) Ael(i) | Silvanus / [h] et Leonides leg(ionis) sig(niferi) / [b]en(e) m<e=I>r(enti).* The later half of the 3rd century. Lit.: *CIL* III, 14503; *AE* 1902, 20; Merlat 1951: 50, num. 52; Zotović 1966: 101-102, num. 44; *CCID* 71, num. 86; Bošković-Robert 2006: 47-48, num. 49; Timoc, Boda 2016: 121-127.

9. Tabula ansata (Figure 9). The vicinity of Čezava, Danube Limes. Bronze. Tabula ansata with the inscription that reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) [M(aximo)] Dolicin(o) (!) | M(arcus) Cocceius Zev | xius v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).* 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Bošković-Robert 2006: 48, num. 50.

10. Votive altar. Karataš, Diana. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade. Marble. The votive altar with the damaged right upper part. Discovered in the Jupiter Dolichenus' shrine. The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Dol(icheno) [p(ro) s(alute)] / M(arci) Aur(eli) Anto/nini Pii Aug(usti) et Iul(iae) / Domn(a)e Aug(ustae) ma/tri(s) Aug(usti) et castro/rum dedicante L(ucio) / Mario Perpetuo / c(onsulari) per Restutum / m(agistrum?) c(ivium) R(omanorum) D(ianae?) sacerdo/tes eiusdem loci / d(edicaverunt?).* Dating 212 to 214. *CCID* 71-72, num. 87; *AE* 2003, 1532; Bošković-Robert 2006: 50-51, num. 52; Mirković 2015: 39.

11. Votive altar. Kumanovo. Limestone. 1x0,74m. The votive altar was discovered at the end of the 19th century

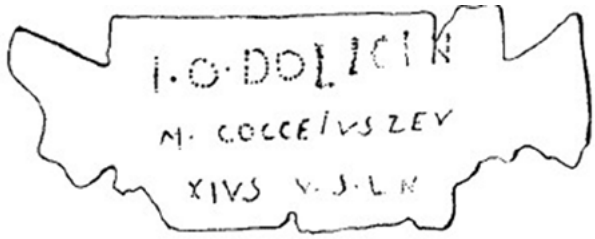


Figure 9

at the entrance of St. Nicola's church in Kumanovo. The inscription reads: *[I(ovi)] Optimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) | pro salute imp(eratoris) M(arci) Aureli | Antonini Pii | Aug(usti et Iuliae | Aug(ustae) matri kast(rorum) | Achilleus eorum | dem servus vi[l](icus) pos(uit) | kal(endis) novembr[ibus] | Sabino II et Anu | lino co(n)s(ulibus).* Dating: 1. November 216. Lit.: Marić 1933: 77-79; Вулић 1941-48: 97, num. 214; Merlat 1951: 52, num. 54; Zotović 1966: 100-101, num. 42; *CCID* 86-87, num. 116; Bošković-Robert 2006: 88-89, num. 102.

12. Votive altar Gračanica. Lost. White marble. 0,7x1,5x0,2m. Fragmented votive altar discovered in the monastery Gračanica. The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) / pro salute d[[d(ominorum) nn(ostrorum)]] / Imp(eratoris) Aug(usti) / Victor Demetri et De/metrius ambibi sace[r]/dotes eiusdem dei s(olverunt) v(otum) [.* Dating: 171-230. Lit.: Вулић 1931: 192, num. 510; Marić 1933: 77; Zotović 1966: 96, num. 36; *IlJug* 3, 1416; *AE* 1966, 340; *CCID* 86, num. 115; Bošković-Robert 2006: 96-97, num. 111.

13. Votive altar (Figure 13). Prizren. Now in the Archaeological Museum in Skoplje. White marble. 0,58x0,28x0,23cm. The votive altar with the relief presentation of Asclepius, Hygieia and Telesphoros (?). The inscription reads: *[Telesphoro Hygiae] // As/clep[i]/o / So[3] / Heracliti Su/rus et pro / Gen(io) I(ovis) O(ptimi) Dolic(h)eni / Paterno deo et Geni(o) / co(ho)rtis votum libies(!) f(ecit.)* Dating: 101-150. Lit.: Вулић 1931: 133, num. 322; Zotović 1964: 19, num. 16; Speidel 1980: 182-185; *AE* 1981, 739; *IlJug* 3, 1438; Bošković-Robert 2006: 106-107, num. 127.

14. Tabula ansata (Figure 14). Brza Palanka, Egeta. Now in the Krajina Museum in Negotin. Bronze. 14,5 height, 10cm width. The tabula ansata was found in the *dolichenum*'s *sacrarium*. The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Doli | Cheni (!) C(o)hor(s) I Cretum.* The middle of the 3rd century. Lit.: Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 174, num. 2; Zotović 1966: 93-94, num. 35G; *CCID* 78, num. 95; Bošković-Robert 2006: 59, num. 65.

15. The base of a statuette with a bull (Figure 15). Brza Palanka, Egeta. Now in the Krajina Museum in Negotin, inv. num. 742. 0,68m height. The fragmented base of a Jupiter Dolichenus' statuary composition,

Figure 13

with the preserved presentation of a bull. Only the god's feet are visible in the bull's back, who is shown very realistically, as a strong animal with a too wide neck. The inscription on the base reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) Pompeius | Isauricus ex | votu (!) posuit.* The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 175, num. I3; Zotović 1966: 92, num. 35C; *CCID* 76-77, num. 91; Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 98, num. 40; Tomović 1993: 107-108, num. 141; Bošković-Robert 2006: 59-60, 148-149, D6.

16. The statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus (Figure 16). Brza Palanka, Egeta. Now in the Krajina Museum in Negotin, inv. num. 743. Yellowish marble. 0,7x0,55m. The fragmented statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus standing on the bull's back. The god is dressed in *a* short military dress, with a thunderbolt in his left hand and presumably a double headed axe in his right hand. Under

Figure 14

Figure 15

the bull's belly, an altar is presented with the image of an eagle with half-stretched wings on it. The inscription on the base reads: *Άγαθη τυχη | Καστωρ Κοιντου κυριω Δολιχηνω | Ευξαηενος ανεθηκα.* The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 175-176, num. 2, fig. 5; Zotović 1966, fig. 8.2; Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 92, num. 37; *CCID* 75, num. 90; Tomović 1993: 108, num. 145, fig. 42.1; Bošković-Robert 2006: 150, D8.

17. Votive altar (Figure 17). Kličevac, Viminacium. Now in the private collection in Leskovac. White marble. 1,5x0,9m. The votive altar in the shape of a cylindrical column. The inscription is damaged in the lower part. The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) / Aur(elius) Iulianus / Iuliani sac(erdos) / eiusdem dei / ex*

Figure 16

pr(ovincia) Syr(ia) Coel(e) / reg(ione) Cyrr(h)ens(i) / vico Capersin(a?). Dating: 201-270. Lit.: Petrović 2004: 217-224. *AE* 2005, 1313.

18. The statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus. Vidin, Bononia. Now in the Lapidarium in Vidin. White marble. 0,38m height. The fragmented statuette of a mature bearded man, without a right arm and both lower legs. The deity is dressed in short chiton with cuirass, with a thunderbolt in his left hand and presumably a double headed axe in his right arm which was raised. He has a short sword on his right hip. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Велков 1932-1933: 404, fig. 155; Merlat 1951: 42, num. 47; Zotović 1966: 96-97, num. 37; *CCID* 83, num. 107; Tomović 1993, 86, num. 63, fig. 19.1; Bošković-Robert 2006: 151-152, D. 11.

19. The head of Jupiter Dolichenus (Figure 19). Viminacium, now in the National Museum in Požarevac, inv. num. 02_2485. 13,5cm height. The head of a mature bearded man, with curly hair and Phrygian hat, skilfully modeled. It was a part of a standard statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus standing on a bull. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 107, num. 45; Tomović 1993: 107, num. 139, fig. 20.4; Bošković-Robert 2006: 146, D1.

20. The statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus. Viminacium. Lost. White marble. 0,55x0,41m. The fragmented

Figure 17

statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus standing on a bull. Only the right foot and part of paludamentum of the god's statue was preserved, as the bull's head, torso and tail. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Merlat 1951: 51, num. 53; Zotović 1966: 100, num. 41; *CCID* 71, num. 85; Tomović 1993: 123, num. 231, fig. 44.2; Bošković-Robert 2006: 146, num. D2.

21. The statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus. Čezava, Castrum Novae. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 2209. White marble. The fragmented statue of a man dressed in a short tunic, with a cuirass. The figure was probably presented with a thunderbolt and a double headed axe in his hands. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Tomović 1993: 85-86, num. 62, fig. 17.1; Bošković-Robert 2006: 147, D3.

22. The statuette of Juno Dolichena. Čezava, Castrum Novae. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 2184. White marble. 18,5cm height. The fragmented statuette of a woman standing on a hind's back. Only part of the woman's chiton and right foot are preserved, as a part of the hind's head, torso and two front legs. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Tomović 1993: 95, num. 98, fig. 44.1; Bošković-Robert 2006: 147-148, D4.

Figure 19

Figure 23

23. The head of Jupiter Dolichenus (Figure 23). Brza Palanka, Egeta. Now in the Krajina Museum in Negotin, inv. num. 748. White marble. 15cm height. The head of a mature bearded man with a Phrygian hat. Skilfully modelled provincial work. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 175-176, fig. 8; Zotović 1966: 93, E; Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 96, num. 39; *CCID* 77-78, num. 93; Tomović 1993: 107, num. 140, fig. 20.3; Bošković-Robert 2006: 148, D5.

24. The statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus (Figure 24). Brza Palanka, Egeta. Now in the Krajina Museum in Negotin, inv. num. 745. White marble. 0,61m height. The fragmented statuette of the deity standing on a bull. Only two feet of the god are visible on the animal's back, as the remains of a paludamentum. The figure of a bull is also fragmented. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 175-176, num. 4, fig. 7; Zotović 1966: fig. 9.2; Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 100, num. 41; *CCID* 77, num. 92; Tomović 1993: 108, num. 142, fig. 42.4; Bošković-Robert 2006: 149, D7.

25. The statuary composition of Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena (Figure 25). Brza Palanka, Egeta. Now in the Krajina Museum in Negotin, inv. num. 740. White marble. 0,43m height. The fragmented statuary composition of Jupiter Dolichenus standing on a bull's back and of Juno Dolichena standing on a hind's back. The god is dressed in a short chiton, with paludamentum over his back, holding a thunderbolt and presumably a double headed axe. Between a bull's horns, an eagle with half-stretched wings is presented. Above the bird, goddess Victoria with big, stretched wings is shown. Juno Dolichena is dressed in a long chiton with short sleeves and holds a patera in her right hand. On the hinds' back, on the goddess's left side, a figure of an eagle with outstretched wings is presented. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965: 173, num. 1, fig. 4; Zotović 1966: 89-90, 35A; Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987: 94, num. 38; CCID 74, num. 89; Tomović 1993: 108, num. 144, fig. 43. 6; Bošković-Robert 2006: 150-151, D10.

26. Statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus (Figure 26). Ravna, Timacum Minus. Now in the National Museum in Niš, inv. num. 382/R. White marble. 17,5cm height. The fragmented statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus standing on a bull's back. Only the god's feet are preserved as the figure of a bull without all four legs. Very carefully and realistically modelled statuette. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1941-48: 93, num. 201; Tomović 1993: 108, num. 143, fig. 42. 2; Дрча 2004: 166, num. 90; Bošković-Robert 2006: 152, D12.

27. The head of Jupiter Dolichenus (Figure 27). Karataš, Diana. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade

Figure 24

Figure 25

Figure 26

Figure 27

(Archaeological Museum Djerdap, Kladovo), inv. num. 967. White marble. 23x15cm. The head of a mature, bearded man with a Phrygian hat on which a laurel wreath is presented with an oval medallion (corona gemata). The head was a part of a larger sculpture or of a sculptural composition, similar to the imperial sculptures that appear at the end of the 2nd century. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Popović, Borić Brešković 2013: 309, num. 70.

28. The triangular votive plate (Figure 28). Brza Palanka, Egeta. Now in the Historical Museum in Belgrade. Gilded bronze. 0,38cm height, 0,24cm width. The fragmented triangular votive plate with the representation of Jupiter Dolichenus. The plate is visually divided into three parts: in the top register, the busts of Sol and Luna, with an eagle carrying a crown in its beak, are presented. In the central register, Jupiter Dolichenus dressed in a short tunic with a cuirass is shown with a thunderbolt in his left hand and a double headed axe in his right hand. Besides the right shoulder of the god, a signum with six discs is presented. In the height of Jupiter Dolichenus' waist, two smaller male figures in bigae are presented – Castores. They are presented identically, except for the helmet on the head of a Castor on the left side, that is a wreath of the head of a Castor on the right side. They are both dressed in long tunics with a cuirass. The Castor on the left side holds a disc in his right raised hand and ears of corn in his left hand. The Castor on the right side holds ears of corn in his right hand, while in his left hand an unidentified object is shown. Besides the Castor on the left side, there is a male figure probably of Jupiter Dolichenus. The first decades of the 3rd century. Lit.: Pop-Lazić 1977: 41-44; Bošković-Robert 2006: 152-154, D. 13; Гавриловић Витас 2019: 189-206.

29. The triangular votive plate. Jasen, Bononia, Vidin. Lost. Bronze. 38cm height, 24cm width. The fragmented triangular votive plate, missing the top. It is visually divided into two registers – in the upper register, Jupiter Dolichenus on a bull's back and Juno Dolichena on a hind's back are presented. They are turned to each other and presented as usually – the god is dressed in a short tunic with a cuirass, holding a thunderbolt and a double headed axe, while the goddess is shown dressed in a long tunic with a mirror in her right hand and a scepter in her left hand. Between their heads, a large crown is presented (as a symbol of goddess Victoria).

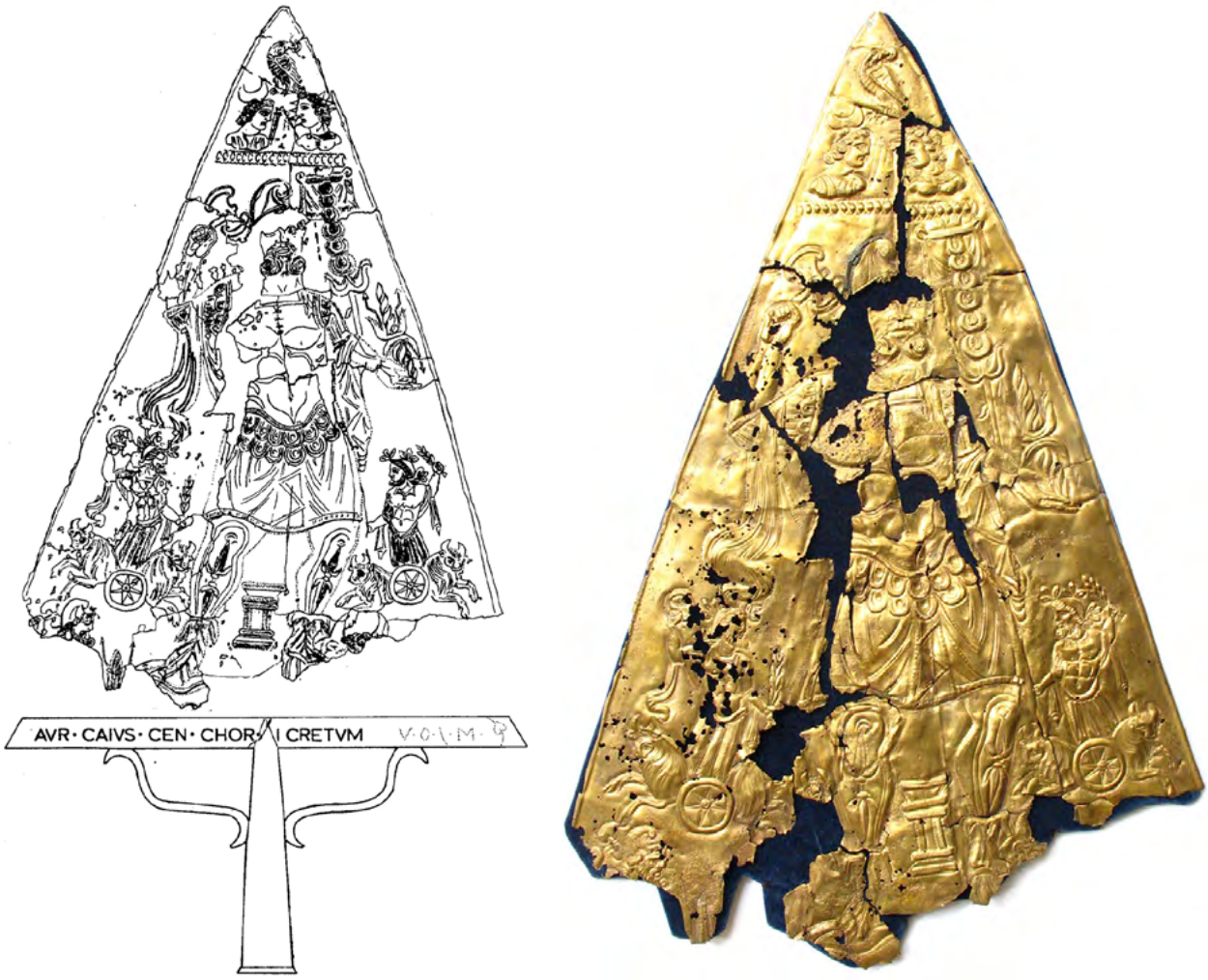


Figure 28

In the lower register, three male figures are presented around the altar. The central figure is performing the libation. The scene of the libation is flanked with two signa. On the left and the right side, two figures of mature, bearded men dressed in long tunics, are shown. The man on the left side holds a thunderbolt and a double headed axe, while the man on the right side holds palm leaves. 3rd century. Lit.: Merlat 1951: 45, num. 50, Pl. III, 2; Speidel 1978: 55, fig. 8; *CCID* 80-82, n. 103; Bošković-Robert 2006: 154-155, D. 14.

30. Bronze statuette of Jupiter Dolichenus (Figure 30). Surduk, Ritium. Now in the Belgrade City Museum, inv. num. AA/4416. Bronze. 11,3cm height. The figure of a mature bearded man in a standing position. The left hand is missing, as both attributes. Jupiter Dolichenus is dressed in a short tunic, with a paludamentum. The second half of the 2nd century. Lit.: Antička bronza u Jugoslaviji 1969: 99, num. 125; Tadin 1979: 29, num. 56, fig. 54; *Античка бронза Сингидунума* 1997: 39, num. 28; Ružić 2006: 252-253, num. 327.

31. The double headed axe of Jupiter Dolichenus (Figure 31). Belgrade, Belgrade's fortress. Now in the Belgrade City Museum. Bronze. 3cm length. The pendant in the shape of a double headed axe. 3rd or the 4th century. Lit.: *Античка бронза Сингидунума* 1997: 81, num. 94; Ružić 2006: 278, num. 367.

32. The terracotta (Jupiter Dolichenus?) (Figure 32). The necropolis 'Više grobalja', Viminacium. Red clay. The fragmented terracotta of a mature bearded man with a Phrygian hat. On the figure's head, face traits are clearly shown as the curls which surround the face. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Зотовић, Јордовић 1990: 28, fig. 14.

33. Applique in the shape of Jupiter Dolichenus' bust (Figure 33). Leskovac, Podrum. Now in the National

Figure 30

Figure 31

Figure 32

Figure 33

Museum in Leskovac, inv. num. A3/240. Bronze. 4,5cm height, 2,6cm width. The bust represents a canonized image of the god, as a mature, bearded man with a Phrygian hat and curly hair falling on his shoulders. The face features are modelled with incisions, while his eyes are represented plastically. The applique represented an ornament of a jug, local work of mediocre quality. The beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Јоцић 2000: cat. 11, fig. 11; Stamenković 2013: cat. 122.2, fig. 98.

V JUPITER TURMASGADES

1. The head of a bull. Kostolac. Limestone. 0,19x0,27x0,15cm. The bull's head is presented in the profile. The claws of a bird are visible on the animal's head. The figure of the bird – an eagle – is missing. On the lower surface, there is a visible hole for the fixing of the eagle's figure on the bull's head. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1909: 135, N1; Зотовић 1977: 34, num. 7; Zotović 1996, 135.

VI JUPITER MELANUS, ZEUS OKKONÈNOS, ZEUS SYNENOS

1. Votive altar. The Holy Archangel's Monastery, Prizren. Limestone. 0,24x0,16x0,1m. The votive altar with partly damaged inscription. The inscription reads: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) | Melano | Martinus | [Se]ptimius | [Cae]sonius | [Gall]icanus | [ex voto(?)] pos(uerunt).* 3rd century. Lit.: Душанић 1971; *AE* 1972, 501; *IlJug* 2, 531A; Parović-Pešikan 1990: 607-616; Bošković-Robert 2006: 107, n. 128.

2. Votive altar. Ulpiana. Limestone. 0,75x0,23m. The votive altar with the inscription: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) | Melcid | Ael(ius) Octa | vianus | vet(eranus) cum | suis v(otum) p(osuit).* Dating: 151-300. Lit.: Mirdita 1980: 186-198; *AE* 1981, 725; Parović-Pešikan 1990: 607-615; Bošković-Robert 2006: 98, n. 114.

3. Votive altar. Ulpiana. Limestone. 0,32x0,22m. The votive altar with the inscription: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) | Mel(ano) Asclep | <ia> des ex v(oto) pa(terno) | ara(m) posui(t).* Dating: 151-300. Lit.: Parović-Pešikan 1990: 607-615; *AE* 1990, 859.

4. Votive altar. Ulpiana. Limestone. 1,04x0,5x0,36m. The votive altar with the inscription: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) | Mel(ano) Cid(iesso) | M(arcus) A(urelius) Oc | tavius | ex voto.* The second half of the 2nd century. Lit.: Peja 1984: 59-61; Bošković-Robert 2006: 99, num. 115.

5. Votive altar. Ulpiana. Discovered in 1958. year during the archaeological excavations in the western necropolis. Now in the Museum in Priština. Limestone. The inscription reads: Ἀπολλώνιος | Μενελάου ἀ|νέστησε τὸν β|ωμὸν θεῷ Διὶ | Ἐζζαίῳ εὐχήν. 1st or the 2nd century. Lit.: Душанић 1971: 258-259, fig. 3; AE 1972, 502; IlJug 524; Bošković-Robert 2006: 114, num. 139.

6. Votive altar. The village Babe, Kosmaj. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade. Limestone. 1,04x0,5x0,4m. The inscription reads: Ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ | Διὶ Ὀκκονην[ῷ] | Σωκράτης Π[α?]|ύλου ἐξ εὐχῆς |ἀνέθηκεν δ[ῶ]||ρον. 1st or the 2nd century. Lit.: *IMS* I, num. 114; Bošković-Robert 2006: 112-113, num. 136.

7. Votive altar. The village Guberevac, Kosmaj. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade. Limestone. 0,83x0,49x0,42m. The inscription reads: Διὶ Συνεν[ῶ] | Ἀντίπατρ[ος] |[Τ]ειμοθέ[ου] |ἐξ ἐυχῆς ἀ[νέ]|θηκεν. 1st or the 2nd century. Lit.: Petković 1997: 185-187; Bošković-Robert 2006: 113, num. 137.

VII MĒN

1. The statuette of god Mēn (Figure 1). Kostolac. Stolen. Bronze. 9cm height. The figure of a young man with spread legs. Both lower arms are missing. The youth has longer hair, he is dressed in a short tunic with a paludamentum. On his left shoulder, there is a part of a crescent. The traits of the young man's face are summarily presented, which implies local work. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Antička bronza u Jugoslaviji 1969: 100, cat. 132; Medini 1987: 180-181; Ružić 2006: 255, num. 329.

Figure 1

2. The statuette of god Mēn-Somnus (Figure 2, 2a). Ušće, Obrenovac. Now in the Belgrade City Museum, inv. num. AA/2125. Bronze. 16,4cm height. The figure of a young man flying, with his left foot placed on a globe. The attributes from his hands are missing. The youth has a Phrygian hat on his head and small wings on his back. His left arm was holding some attribute (missing), while in his right hand the young man was holding a marsupium, a torch or a horn. The whole figure is very skilfully modeled, solid provincial work. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Antička bronza u Jugoslaviji 1969: 98, num. 122; Tadin 1979: 24, num. 45; Бојовић 1985: 35-36, num.

Figure 2

23; *Античка бронза Сингидунума* 1997: 37, num. 20; Ružić 2006: 256, num. 331.

VIII ARTEMIS OF EPHESUS

1. The gemstone with the representation of Artemis of Ephesus (Figure 1). Unknown provenience, redeemed from H. Lederer in Belgrade. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 09_337. Orange carnelian. 9x7x2,6mm. The gem of oval shape, with the image of Artemis of Ephesus standing with open arms. Two bands are falling from her arms. Above the figure's head, the moon is presented on the left side and a star on the right side. Summarily done presentation, local work. 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 422, cat. 330, T. XXVIII/330.

2. The gemstone with the representation of Artemis of Ephesus (Figure 2). Kostolac, necropolis, from the private collection of captain Tadić. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 09_1611. Orange-dark carnelian. 11,8x8,6x4mm. The gem of oval shape, with the image of Artemis of Ephesus wearing a polos on her head. In both open arms, the goddess is holding a torch. Very summary work. 2nd or the 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 422-423, cat. 331, T. XXVIII/331

3. **The lamp with the representation of Artemis of Ephesus** (Figure 3). Stobi. South-western necropolis, inv. num. L-95/128. The ceramic lamp is damaged in the upper right part. In the center of the lamp, the image of Artemis of Ephesus is presented, standing with the open arms, resting her hands on two staffs-sceptres. The goddess is shown with a halo around her head. Beside Ephesian Artemis, two deers are presented with their backs turned to each other. On the long dress that Artemis is wearing, different motifs are presented,

Figure 1

Figure 2

fig. 3.png

unfortunately not visible enough to be identified with certainty (probably animal and vegetable ornaments). Probably local work. 3rd-4th century. Lit.: Bitrakova Grozdanova 2020: 92-97, sl. 1.

IX SOL INVICTUS

1. Votive altar (Figure 1). The locality 'Krst', Osmakovo. Now in the lapidarium of National Museum in Niš, inv. num. 29/E. Grey limestone. 0,68x0,27x0,27m. The votive altar damaged in the upper right part. The inscription reads: *Soli in|victo | Val(erius) Iucun|dus ex | voto p(osuit) | Perpetu(o) et | Corne<l>i<a>no | co(n)s(ulibus).* 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1931: 127, num. 282; Вулић 1933: 63, num. 187; IMS IV 107, n. 79.

2. Votive altar. Pljevlja, buit in the fountain. Limestone. 0,59m height. The votive altar with the inscription: *Soli in|victo sac(rum) | Sext(us) Babe|rius Ianu|[ar(ius)] v(otum) p(osuit) | m(erito).* 3rd century. Lit.: Вулић 1941-48: 135, num. 297.

Figure 1

Figure 3

3. The gemstone with the representation of Sol (Figure 3). Unknown provenience, redeemed from D. Tesla from Belgrade. Now in the Belgrade City Museum, inv. num. 2973. Grey-green opal. 13,5x9,7x3mm. The gemstone of oval shape with the representation of the god Sol. The deity is presented naked, standing, with a radiate crown on his head, turned on his left side. In his raised hand he holds a branch or a thunderbolt, while in his left hand he holds a whip. 3rd century. Lit.: Бојовић 1984/85: 143, cat. 12; Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 418, cat. 317, T. XXVII/317.

4. The gemstone with the representation of Sol (Figure 4). Unknown provenience, redeemed from M. Nikolić in 1933. year. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 1609/II. Red jasper. 13x10,2x2,6mm. The gemstone of oval shape with the image of naked, standing god Sol with a radiate crown on his head, turned on his right side. In his left hand the deity holds a whip. 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 418, cat. 318, T. XXVIII/318.

Figure 4

5. The gemstone with the representation of Sol (Figure 5). Unknown provenience. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 1590/II. Calcedony. 11x10,8x3,8mm. The gemstone of almost round shape, presenting the god Sol with the radiate crown in his head, turned on his left side. Over his left arm is a piece of cloth and he holds a whip. 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 419, cat. 319, T. XXVII/319.

Figure 5

6. The gemstone with the representation of Sol (Figure 6). Veliko Gradište, Pincum. Redeemed from D. Stanisavljević from Veliko Gradište. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 3969/III. Orange carnelian. 13,4x10x3mm. The gemstone of oval shape with the image of the god Sol wearing a radiate crown. The deity is turned to the right side, holding a whip in his right hand. 3rd century. Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 419, cat. 320, T. XXVII/320.

Figure 6

7. The gemstone with the representation of Sol in quadriga (Figure 7). Unknown provenience, redeemed from M. Blagojević from Ušće, Obrenovac. Now in the Belgrade City Museum, inv. num. 2456. Orange carnelian. 11x11x5mm. The gemstone of oval shape with the image of the god Sol in quadriga. The deity is presented frontally, with a radiate crown. His both arms are raised and he is holding a whip in his left hand, while in his right hand is cornucopia. 3rd century. Lit.: Бојовић 1984/85: 148, cat. 36; Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 419, cat. 321, T. XXVII/321.

Figure 7

8. The gemstone with the representation of Sol in quadriga (Figure 8). Guberevac, necropolis Gomilice. The gift of M. Trifunović from Guberevac. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 1843/II. White-yellow chalcedony. 19x15x6,6mm. The gemstone of oval shape with the image of god Sol in quadriga, wearing a radiate crown. The deity holds a whip in his right hand. 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 420, cat. 322, T. XXVIII/322.

Figure 8

9. The ring with a gemstone with the representation of Sol in quadriga (Figure 9a-b). Ušće, Obrenovac. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 4019/III. Achate, silver. The diameter of a ring 3,6cm. The gemstone of oval shape with the image of the god Sol in quadriga, with a radiate crown. The deity holds a whip in his right hand and a cornucopia in his left hand. The second half of the 3rd century. Lit.: Поповић 1992: 45, cat. 91; Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 420, cat. 323, T. XXVIII/323.

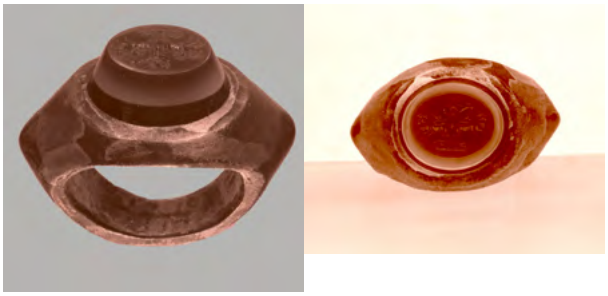


Figure 9

10. The ring with a gemstone with the representation of Sol in quadriga (Figure 10). Unknown provenience. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 875/II. Carnelian, silver. The diameter of the ring 2,6cm. The gemstone of oval shape with the image of the god Sol in quadriga. The deity wears a radiate crown in his head and holds a whip in his left hand. The first half of the 3rd century. Lit.: Поповић 1992: 13, cat. 84; Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 420, cat. 324, T. XXVIII/324.

Figure 10

11. The gemstone with the representation of Sol in quadriga (Figure 11). Unknown provenience. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 1603/II. Red-orange carnelian. 17,4x15,6x6,4mm. The fragmented gemstone of oval shape with the image of god Sol in quadriga with a radiate crown in his head. The deity holds the reins and a whip in his hands. 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 421, cat. 325, T. XXVIII/325.

Figure 11

12. The gemstone with the representation of god Sol riding a horse (Figure 12). Unknown provenience. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 1577/II. Red-orange carnelian. 16,8x14,6x3mm. The gemstone of oval shape with the image of the god Sol riding a horse. The deity wears a radiate crown on his head and holds a whip in one hand. 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 421, cat. 326, T. XXVIII/326.

Figure 12

13. The gemstone with the representation of Sol's bust (Figure 13). Vodice, Ritopek, redeemed from B. Lazarević in Ritopek. Now in the Belgrade City Museum, inv. num. 942. Orange carnelian. 12,2x 9,7x3,5mm. The gemstone of oval shape with the image of Sol's bust in the profile. The divinity wears a radiate crown on his head. 3rd century. Lit.: Бојовић 1984/85: 143, cat. 11; Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 421, cat. 327, T. XXVIII/327.

Figure 13

14. The gemstone with the representation of Sol's bust (Figure 14). Unknown provenience, redeemed from H. Lederer in Belgrade. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 3393/III. Glass paste. 11,7x10x1,4mm. The gemstone of oval shape with the image of Sol's bust in the profile. The deity wears a radiate crown in his head and a part of himation

with a fibula can be seen. 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 422, cat. 328, T. XXVIII/328.

Figure 14

15. The gemstone with the representation of Sol's bust (Figure 15). Unknown provenience, redeemed from H. Lederer in Belgrade. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 3399/III. Opal. 16x13,5x4mm. The gemstone of oval shape with the image of Sol's bust in the profile. The deity wears a radiate crown. 3rd century. Lit.: Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 422, cat. 329, T. XXVIII/329.

Figure 15

16. The ring with the gemstone with the syncretistic representation of Serapis-Sol (Figure 16a-b). Unknown provenience, now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 667/II. Opal light and dark blue, gold. The diameter of the ring is 2,4cm. The gemstone of oval shape, with the image of Serapis-Sol. The deity wears a kalathos and a radiate crown in his head. The first half of the 3rd century. Lit.: Поповић 1992: 28, cat. 31; Нововић-Кузмановић 2005: 435, cat. 370.

Figure 16

17. The relief mirror with the representation of Sol (Figure 17). The locality 'Pećine', grave G1-119, Viminacium. Now in the National Museum in Požarevac, inv. num. C-1769/P. Gilded bronze foil. The diameter 9,8cm. The relief mirror with the central scene presenting god Dionysus and Ariadne. Dionysus is presented resting on the couch, while Ariadne is in front of him on klyne. Ariadne is nude, covered with a drapery from the waist down. She has a necklace and both deities wear wreaths in their hair. There is a veil in the shape of a canopy above Ariadne's head, while behind her a Satyr is presented. Behind Dionysus, the god Sol's bust with a radiate crown is presented. The solar deity holds a whip in his hand, thrown over his shoulder. At the foot of the couch, a sword, a shield and greaves are presented. It is a skillfully and beautifully modelled work. The end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Lit.: Rankov 1980: cat. 49; Karović 1995: 217–224, fig. 1–3, T. I/2; Спасић 2001: 162–165, num. 1, fig. 2–3; Спасић-Ђурић 2002: 72, fig.51; Пилиповић 2011: 214, num. 40.

Figure 17

18. Helios (Figure 18a-b). Belgrade, now in the Belgrade City Museum, inv. num. 1. White marble. 16cm height. The head of a young man, inclined to the right side. Wavy hear surrounds a round face with a low forehead and wider neck. The eyes and the eyebrows are carefully shaped, unlike the wide nose and massive chin. The first half of the 3rd century. Lit.: Tomović 1993: 110, num. 152, fig. 22.3.

19. Helios (Figure 19a-b). The locality 'Perivoj', Kostolac. Now in the National Museum in Požarevac, inv. num. 1371. White marble. 9cm height. The head of a young man with shorter wavy hair. Similar to the previous monument – a round face with a low forehead.

Figure 18

Figure 19

The face features are less skillfully presented than in Helios' head from Belgrade. The first half of the 3rd century. Lit.: Tomović 1993: 110-111, num. 153, fig. 19.2.

20. The applique in the shape of Sol's bust (Figure 20). Unknown provenience. Now in the National Museum in Belgrade, inv. num. 2706/III. Bronze. 6,3cm height, 5,3cm width. The bust of Sol with a radiate crown with seven rays. The head of the deity is presented summarily – the face features (eyes, nose, mouth) are modelled with incisions. Very unskillfully done provincial work. 3rd century. Величковић 1972: 80-81, num. 120, fig. 120; Ružić 2006: 322.

Figure 20

XI DEA SYRIA

1. Votive altar. Dolno Nerezi, south-western from Skoplje, Scupi. Lost. Marble. Fragmented votive plate. The inscription reads: *[- - -] L. f(ilius) Pub(lilia) RE | [±4] Vero<n>a CON | [de] c(urio) quaestor II v(i)r | [col(oniae) Fl(aviae) (?)] fel(icis) Dar(danorum) hoc t(em)pl(um) | [impe]*

nsa sua fac(iendum) c(uravit) | [D]eae Syriae. The end of the 1st century. Lit.*:* *IMS* VI, 57-58, num. 15; Jovanova 2015: 296, num. 1.

2. Votive altar presumably dedicated to Dea Syria. The Skoplje fortress. Lost. Marble. The fragmented votive altar with the inscription: *S]anct[issimae] | [D]eae [Syriae(?).* The end of the 1st century. Lit.*:* *IMS* VI, 58, num. 17; Jovanova 2015: 296, num. 3.

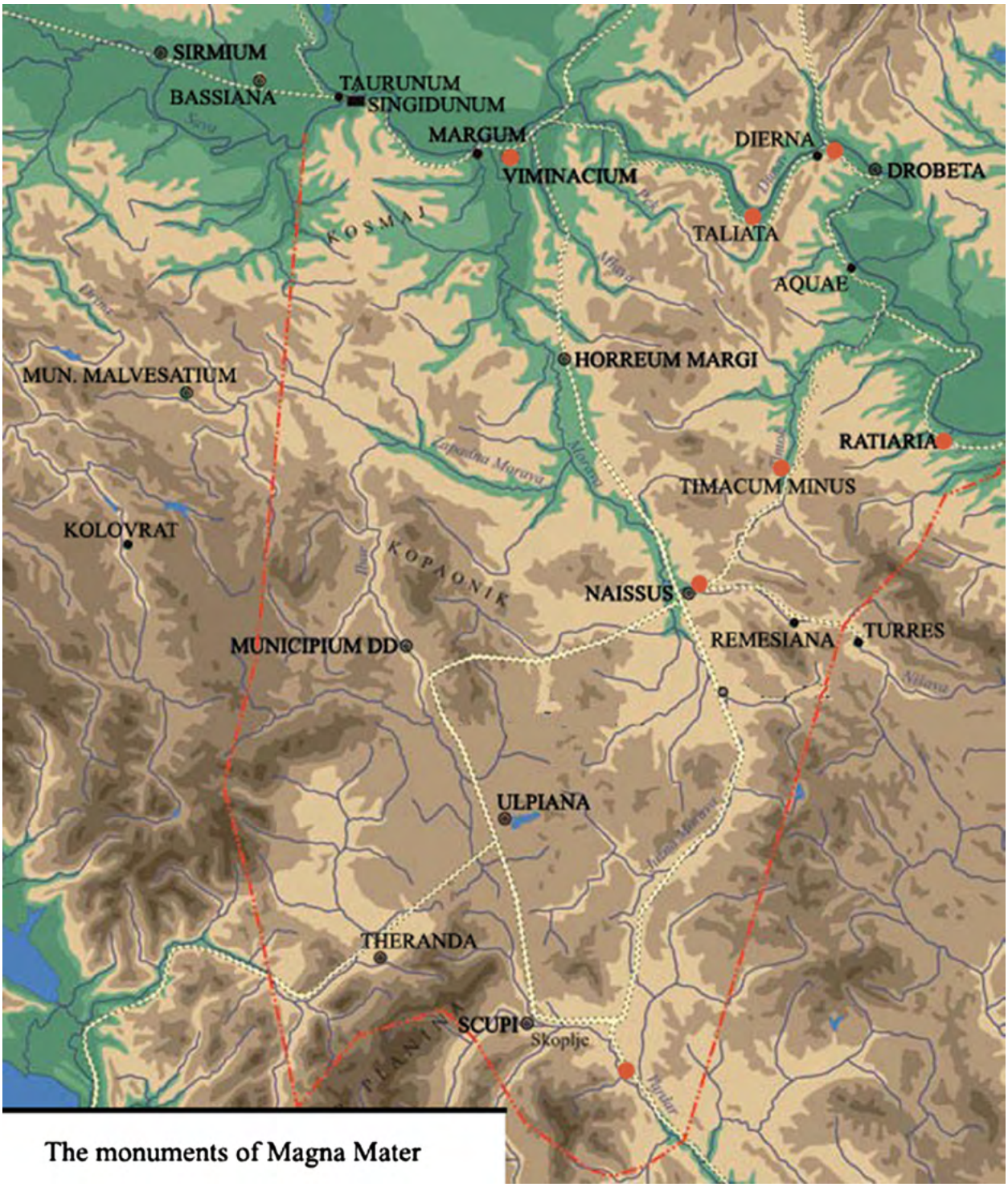
3. Funerary stele (Figure 3). Glamija I, the village Rtkovo, Danube Limes. Found inside the late antique Roman fortification, used as *spolia.* Limestone. Preserved part of the fragmented monument: 0,57x0,71m. The inscription reads: *D(is) M(anibus)| in memoria(m) Iul(ii) Apollina | ris sacerdo| tis I(ovis) Dol(icheni) et | deae Syriae | - - - XXI.* The first half of the 3rd century. Lit.*:* Gabričević 1987: 132; Mirković 2015: 100.

Figure 3

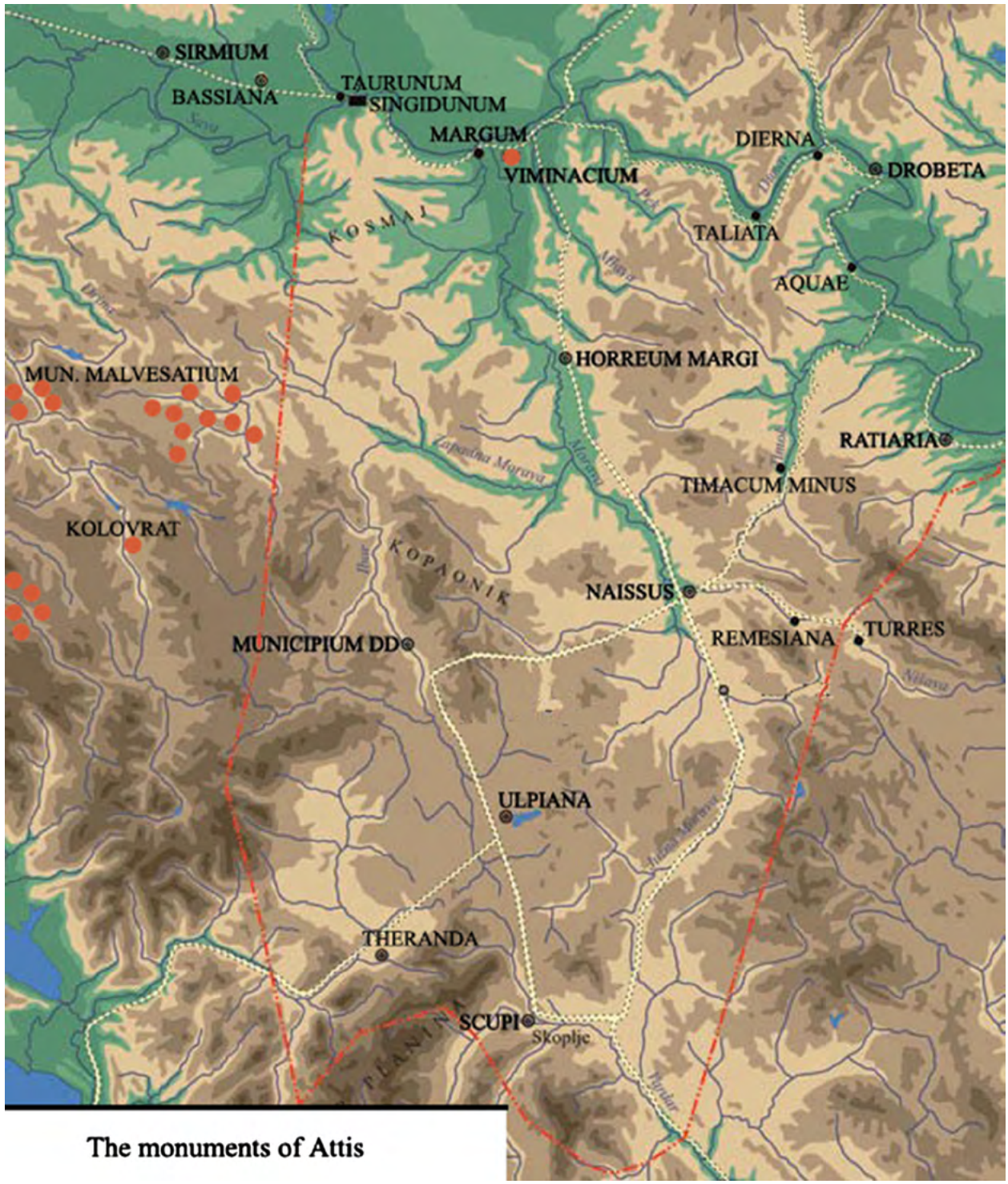
XII THEOS HYPSISTOS

1. Votive altar. Pirot. Limestone. The votive altar with the inscription: Αγαθη [τύ]χ[η]| θεώ επηκόω ύφιστψ | Ευχήν ανέοτησαν | το κοινον εκ των ι | διων δια ίερεως | Ερμογένους και προ | Στάτου Αυγουστιανου | Αχιλλευς Αυρηλις Διο[ς] Αλέ | ξανδρος Μοκας Μο[κι] ανος | Δομητις Σοφεινος Παυ | Λεινος Πύρος Απολινά | ρις Μοκιανος [Σ?]ηλυς | και Αλεξανδρος Ασκ | ληπιαδου Θία[σος] Σεβαζι | ανός.....The second half of the 2nd century or the early 3rd century. Lit.*:* Marić 1933: 21; Macrea 1959: 339; Picard 1961: 175; Kojić 1966: 183-185; Tacheva-Hitova 1983: 178, num. 24; Johnson 1984: 1606; Levinskaya 1993: 125-128; Ustinova 1999: 243.

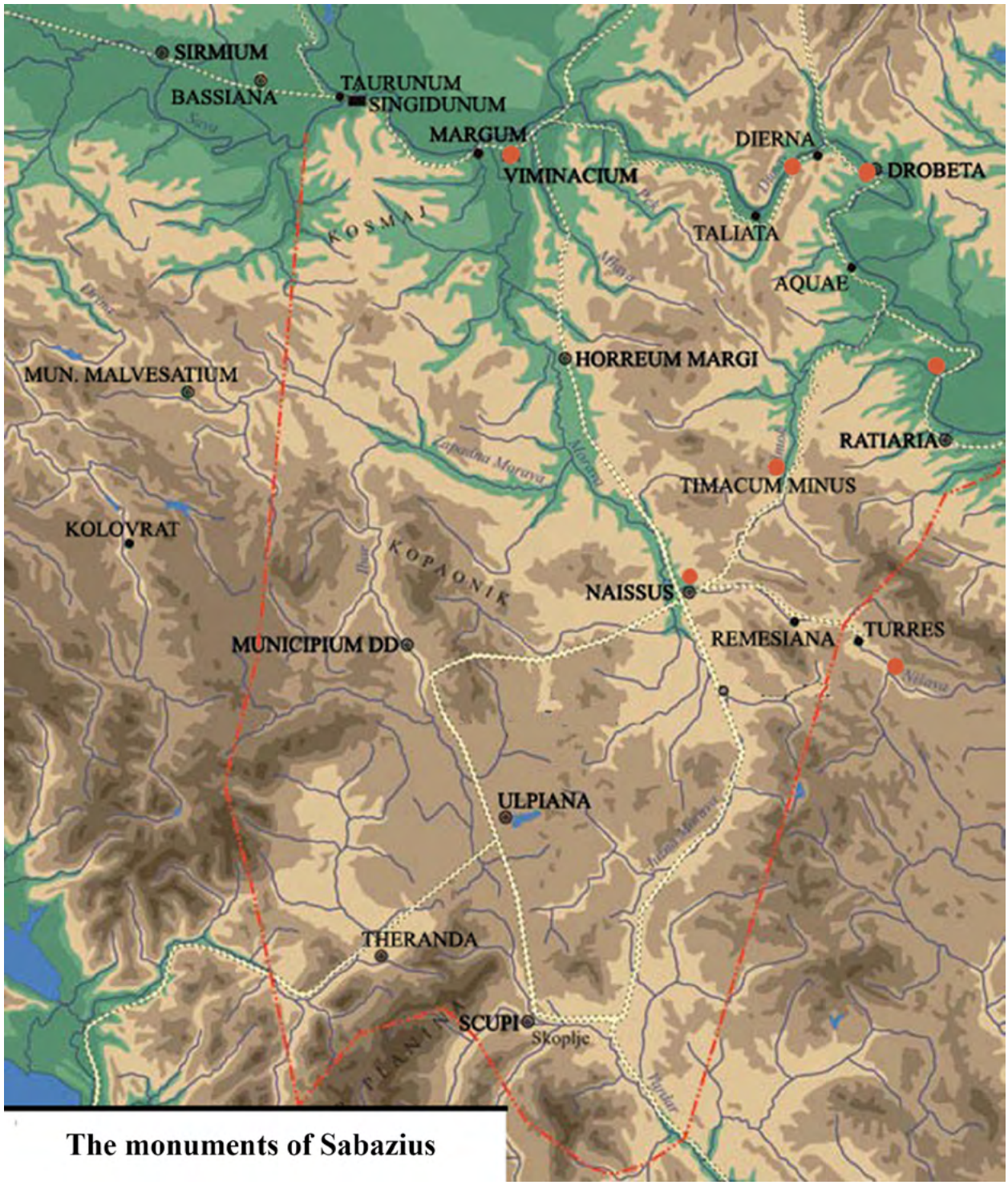
VIII Maps



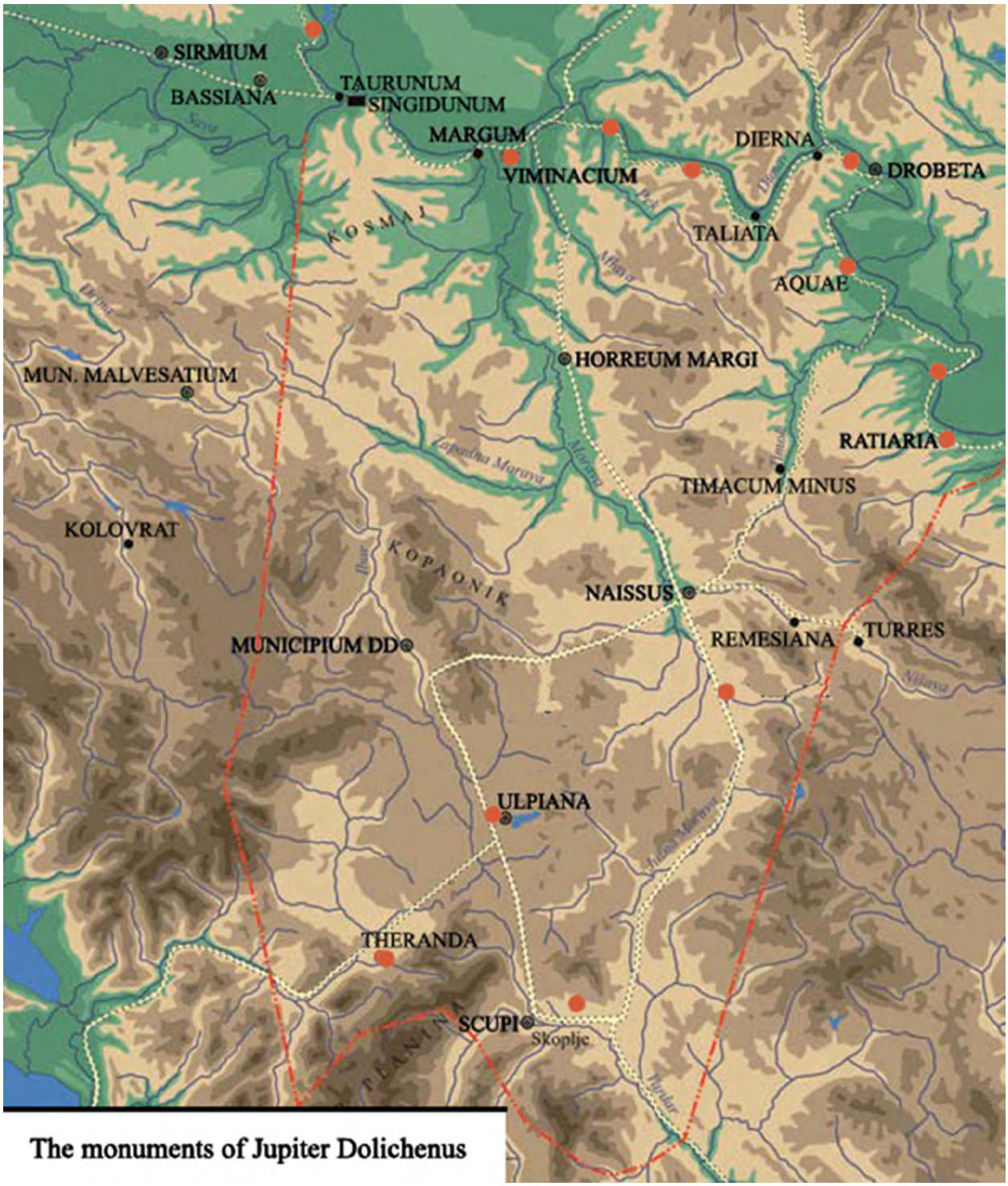
The monuments of Magna Mater



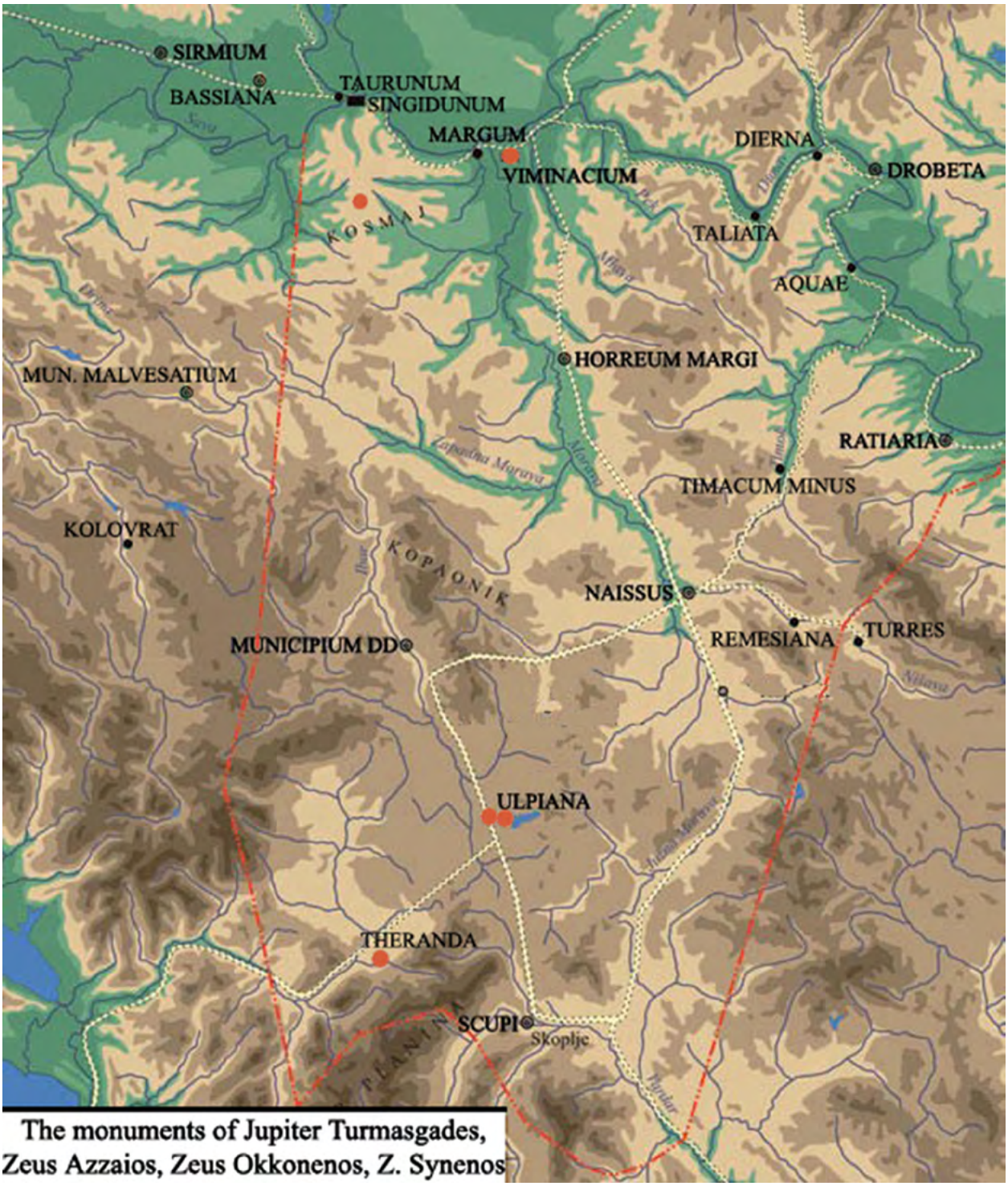
The monuments of Attis



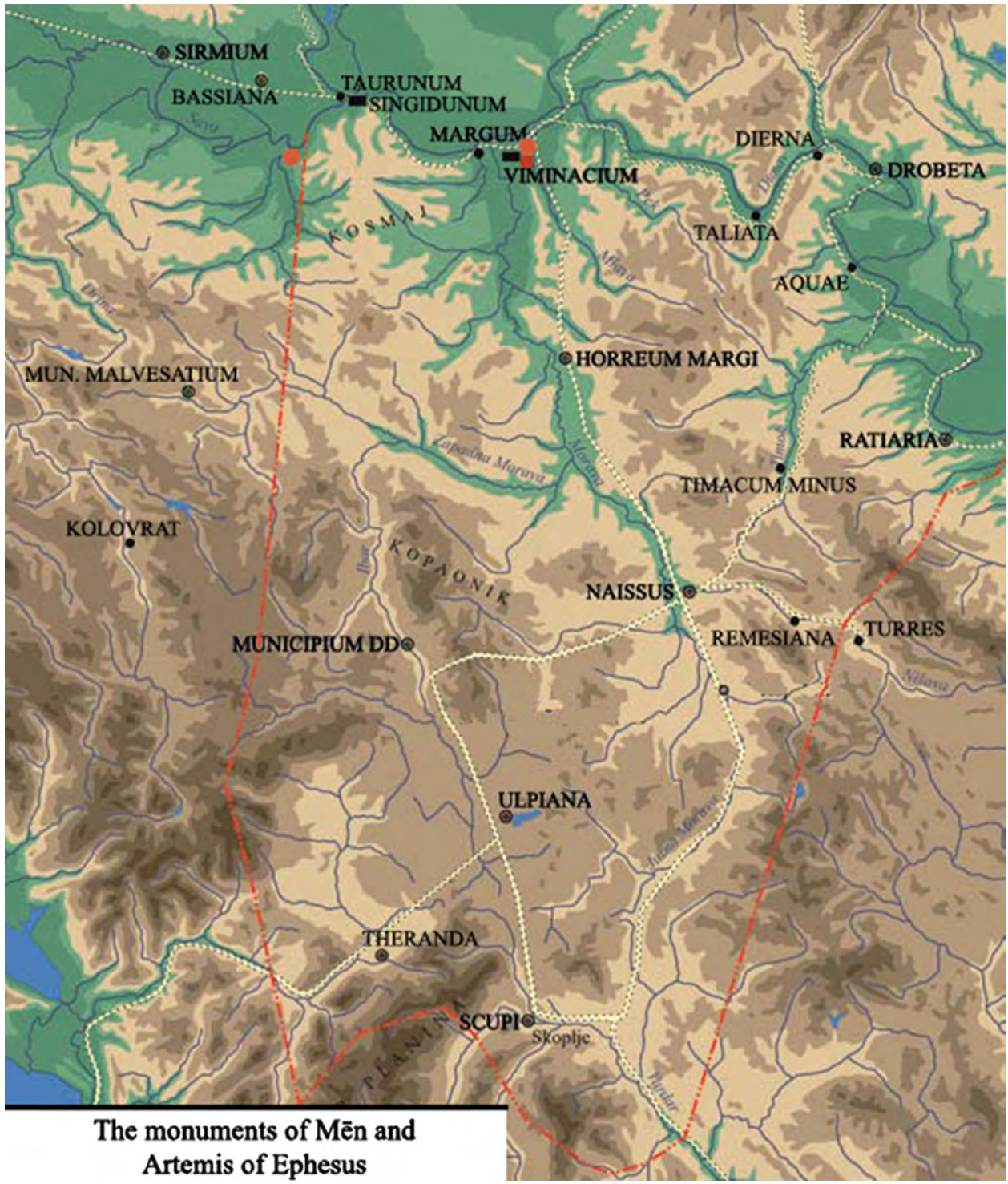
The monuments of Sabazius



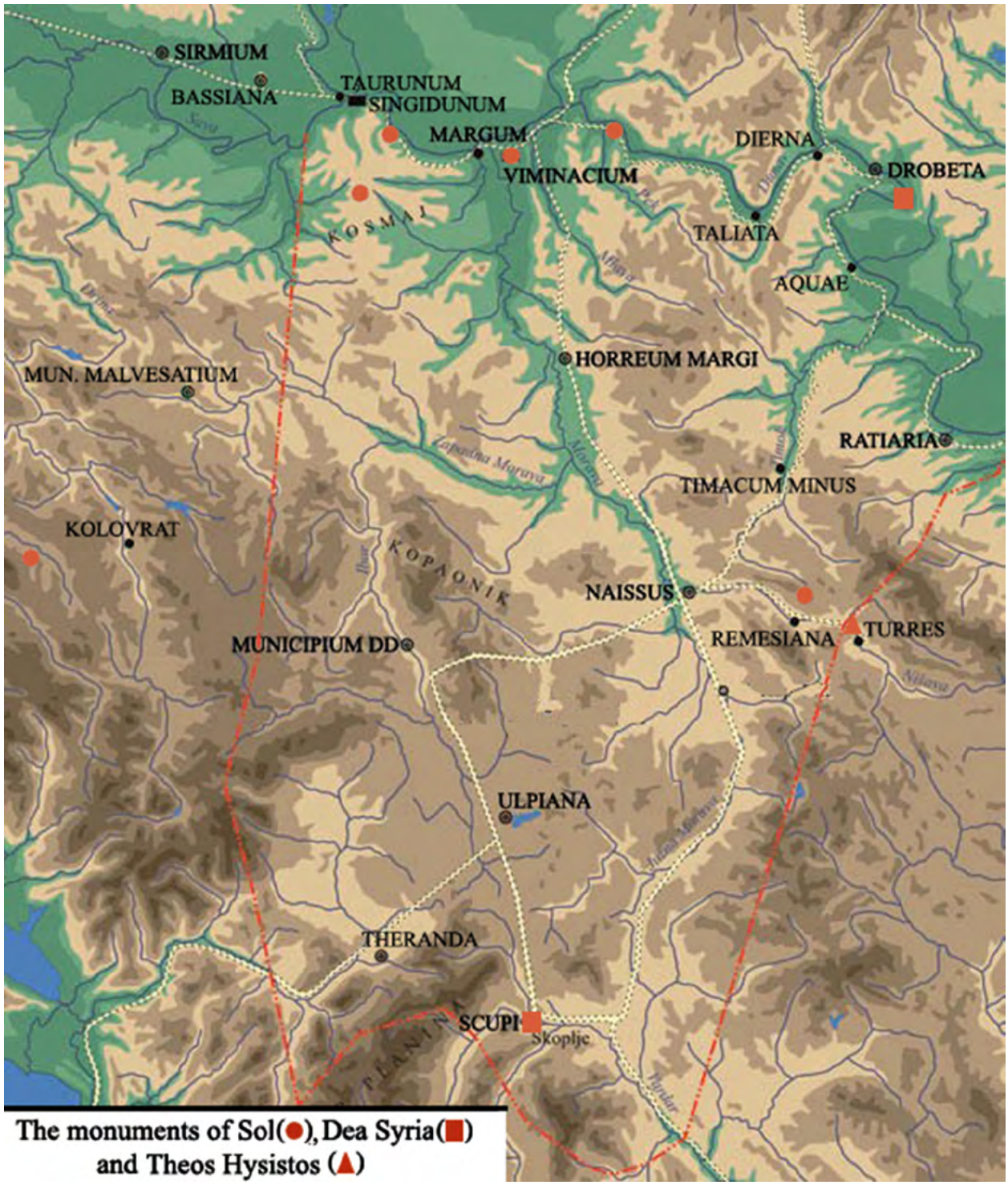
The monuments of Jupiter Dolichenus



The monuments of Jupiter Turmasgades, Zeus Azzaios, Zeus Okkonenos, Z. Synenos



The monuments of Mēn and Artemis of Ephesus



The monuments of Sol(●), Dea Syria(■) and Theos Hysistos (▲)

Ex Asia Minor et Syria: Religions in the Roman Central Balkans **investigates the cults of Asia Minor and Syrian origin in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans. The author presents, analyzes and interprets all hitherto known epigraphical and archaeological material which attests to the presence of Asia Minor and Syrian cults in that region, a subject which is yet to be the object of a serious scholarly study. Thus the book both reviews previously known monuments and artefacts, many of which are now missing or are destroyed, and adds new finds, exploring their social and geographical context from all possible angles, and focusing on the thoughts and beliefs of the dedicants and devotees of the particular cult in question. New conclusions are presented in a scientific framework, taking account of the latest theoretical developments.**

Nadežda Gavrilović Vitas **obtained her PhD in archaeology from the University of Belgrade. She has worked at the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade since 1999, mainly focusing on Roman religion, epigraphy, settlements and necropolises. She is the director of the archaeological projects and excavations 'Mediana – the residence of Constantine the Great' and 'Building with octagon in Niš Fortress' in Niš.**

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